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A HOME WEEKLY

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No. 360

UNCOUNTED BLESSINGS.

BY EBEN E. REXFORD.

I sometimes tire of making vain endeavor.
For things I never win, though sought so long,
And wonder if my plans must fail forever.
And minor chords creep into life's low song,
Until my heart is heavy with its sorrow,
As things beyond me, always far away,
Keep returning on, and whispering — "To-mor-
row!"

But never hold the music of "To-day!"

The things just out of reach seem always fairer
Than any things to-day can have and hold.
To-morrow comes with brighter morn —
And so we miss the present hour's gold.
To-morrow we lose in dreams of the to-morrow,
And when to-morrow comes, the heart will lay
Plans for the future, thinking o'er in sorrow
The squandered blessings of the yesterday.

We lose the little joys of life forever
In thinking of the far-off unattained,
And by and by, when fainting hope says "Never,"
For we've missed, life's long regret is gain-
ed.

If we could take life's blessings as we find them,
Making the most of bright or cloudy days,
Departing, they would leave content behind them,
And vague unrest be banished from our ways.

Winning Ways: OR, KITTY ATHERTON'S HEART.

BY MARGARET BLOUNT.

CHAPTER IV. BETWEEN TWO HEARTS.

"Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
I know you proud to bear your name,
Your pride yet no mate for mine.
* * *
Nor would I break for your sweet sake,
A heart that dotes on truer charms;
A simple maiden in her flower,
Is worth a hundred coats of arms."

TENNYSON.
The letter which was to bring Mr. Oliver "to his houses" was duly written that night, and sent to the "Bell Inn" the next morning by the trusty hand of the hostler at Stoney Cross. Mr. Oliver was still asleep. The chambermaid dared not knock at his door until she was summoned by him, so the man returned without an answer. Miss Marchmont sat in her breakfast-parlor awaiting him. When he had told his tale, her face darkened over like a winter sky.

"Tell them to get me a carriage, quick!" she exclaimed; "I wish to get away within ten minutes. Don't stand staring there, but hurry the horses, and tell them to make out the bill."

The man obeyed with a stupid gaze of wonder.

Miss Marchmont's silk dress rustled stormily as she ran up to her chamber, and with her own hands gathered together her "belongings" and crammed them into the small trunk she had brought with her. Generally speaking, she was a most orderly person; tidiness with her was nearly a disease, and the sight of a crowded drawer, or a toilet-table, whose appurtenances were not laid down by plummet and rule, almost made her ill. But now she scarcely seemed to know or care what she was doing. Her riding-habit, spurs, boots, and whip were crammed into the box beside black moire antiques, lutes, strings, and velvet jackets; the diamond studs she sometimes wore found a place in her box of pens; her Maltese lace collar and chemisettes were rolled up like a bundle of rags, and stashed into a distant corner; and she herself seemed perfectly unconscious all the while of the wild confusion she was making. Forcing down the lid of the trunk, she locked it, and rung for a servant to carry it away; then, putting on her hat and cloak, she snatched up her gloves and returned to the parlor. In ten minutes more she had settled the bill, bidden her landlady good-bye, and was riding away toward Lyndhurst Station as fast as the pony-chaise could carry her. What could she have expected, what had she failed to find, that she was thrown into such a fever of impatient excitement?

That morning she fancied she had made a fool of herself. She had written, according to promise, to Mr. Oliver, mentioning her adventure with "County Guy," and begging him, if his own heart was not engaged in the pursuit of the rustic beauty, to relinquish it in the young farmer's favor. It was an awkward task for her to undertake, and she had made the matter worse by an allusion to herself, which she fancied it must be impossible for him to mistake. What madness dictated the words she could not tell—but they had been written and would be read—and they amounted to no less than a tacit confession of her preference for him. Had that mad girl found him awake—had he translated it rightly, and believed in the truth of his own translation, how much suffering might have been spared them both!

As it was, her face burned with blushes during her rapid ride, although she was alone. She had forfeited her own self-respect, and that was but little—she had richly earned his contempt, and that was more bitter still. Restless, irritable, wild with the pangs of wounded love and wounded pride, she chafed over her mistake like a caged lioness, and scarcely drew a free breath till she was safe that night in her London home. There, with the letters that arrived during her absence, the housekeeper's report, and the proofs of her book, which was just passing through the press, she managed to forget for a time what she had done.

The letter which had disturbed her so deeply was given to Mr. Oliver at the breakfast-table, by the rosy-cheeked servant who waited on him. He was busy with the morning paper when she laid it down, and not till he had glanced through all the columns, and duly digested the leading articles, did he break its seal.

A vivid color suffused his face as he saw the firm, clear writing, and the signature upon the last page. He read the first words with an impatient pshaw! Actually smiled over the description of William Hill's troubles, and murmured to himself that it was a bit of Miss Marchmont's "pathetic line of business;" but came at last upon a passage that made him pause and look more serious:



Kitty's little hands bathing his throbbing temples—Kitty's dark eyes fixed upon him with such watchful love.

moment that she could have sunk into the very depths of the earth only to be out of William's sight. If for a moment he had cherished any secret hope that he might have been mistaken in his thoughts about Kitty and the author, I think it must have vanished then and there, as he looked upon that hidden face, that shrinking, trembling form. It was some time before he spoke again; but when he did so, his voice was very weak.

"Kitty, dear, don't be frightened. I am not going to scold or blame you. I only want to talk to you seriously for a few moments, if you will let me. May I?"

"Yes," sighed Kitty.

"Take away your hands, then—let me look at you. What can you be afraid of, my love? Don't you know I would rather die this moment than give you pain?"

"Oh, that is it! That is it!" cried Kitty in a choked voice. "You are so kind—too kind—and I am a wretch!"

It was a tacit confession of her inconstancy—he felt it so, and, from that moment neither attempted to hide or disguise it any more.

"No; don't say that, love. You are my own good little Kitty now, as you have ever been. But you have made a mistake about me, have you not? You thought you loved me when you promised to be my wife—" The brave fellow's voice faltered a little, and he could not go on.

But Kitty, forgetting him for a moment, and only eager to excuse her own apparently-inexcusable conduct, started up, took his passive hand, and cried out, blushing: "Oh, indeed I did, William, or I never would have promised. I always thought I loved you—till—"

"Till Mr. Oliver came!" he said, finishing the sentence for her.

She hung her head, and touched his hand humbly with her lips.

"Oh, William, forgive me. I could not help it, though I tried. He was so clever, so good—so different from any one I had ever seen before."

"He was—and he is!" replied the young man, with bitter emphasis. "And he is handsome and rich into the bargain. He can give you a splendid home and a name that every one knows. I have nothing to offer you but a poor cottage, these strong hands, this honest heart! Kitty, I don't blame you for choosing him instead of me."

"Oh, how you wrong me!" she exclaimed, with sudden energy. "It is not the home and the name I care for; it is himself! At first, it was his writings that I admired: but now, if he were a beggar in rags, I would go with him, if he asked me, work, beg, and die with him, if need be, because he is so dear—so dear to me, that I cannot find words to say what I feel!"

She stopped short, for William turned so pale that she could not but remember where she was, and to whom and of whom she was speaking.

"You say this to me!" he murmured—"to me! And I was to have been your husband three months more. Oh, Kitty, it is hard!"

She could not but be moved by the sight of his sufferings.

"Forgive me," she said, gently. "I ought not to have said it; but the words came, and I could not stop them."

"No doubt—no doubt. Never mind me, Kitty, I can bear it. And I may as well know the worst. When a man has got his death-blow, a stab or two, more or less, makes little difference to him. Now, tell me all. Talk to me as if I was your own brother. Has this man asked you to marry him?"

"No."

"He has some honor then about him. He knew you were engaged to me, and he has respected us both so far, for which I thank him. But when he knows that you are free, as he will know to-morrow, Kitty, he will ask you to marry him. If I was not sure of that, I would not let you go. What answer shall you give?"

Was there any need to ask that question? On look at her downcast eyes should have been enough. Nay, it was enough, and he went on with a patient sigh, that never reached her ear.

"I would not say one word, Kitty, to make you unhappy; but I do think that when he asks you that question, you ought to ask him another: about that lad from London who was here the other day. Do you remember?"

Kitty looked brightly. Had she not wasted many an hour since that sunny afternoon, in wild conjectures about the stranger, who, although she was not gifted with beauty or grace, had yet managed to take Mr. Oliver from her, and make him utterly oblivious of her presence, for a full quarter of an hour? That lady who had known him before she herself had, but of whom he said so little—that lady who stood suddenly beside the Forest brook, as if she had dropped from the clouds, and who looked at her with so much meaning in her eyes! And William could ask if she remembered her!

"What of her? What do you know of her? What is she to Mr. Oliver? What is Mr. Oliver to her?" she cried out, eagerly.

"Those are questions which Mr. Oliver must answer," was the grave reply. "I know nothing more of the lady than this, that she was good and kind to me, when I needed goodness and kindness most, and that it struck me then, through all my trouble, that she was fond of Mr. Oliver. I don't know if I was mistaken or not. People ought not to marry without the fullest mutual understanding on such points as these."

Kitty sighed, and said she thought so, too; but all the while her heart was very sore at the thought that Miss Marchmont, or Miss Anybodyelse, could ever, at any period of his former life, have been more to Francis Oliver than she was now. If he could have come to her as she came to him, loving for the first time, with pure lips and a fresh heart, how much dearer he would have been! She did not put that feeling into words. She might have denied its existence if any one else had done so, but it was there all the same.

William, who had been watching her changing face for some time in silence, now rose to go. "It is getting late, Kitty; the clock will soon strike ten. I have much to do before I sleep. I am going away to-morrow."

"Going? Where?"

"To London."

"So suddenly. And because of this—because of me?"

"Even so, Kitty. Do you quite understand

of the farmer's noonday meal. Alas! poor Kitty! you are, by no means, the first of your sex whom circumstances and a man have made an utter fool.

The brown cob galloped steadily on. Beside the Forest brook, its rider drew rein for a few moments, and sat lost in a reverie, with his eyes fixed upon the bank where Olive Marchmont had stood on the previous afternoon. The old strange sense of loss and bereavement came over him, and he felt that he was right, as he rode toward her temporary home, to ask the road toward her home and in the way he is longing for.

Ah! how comically sad, how ludicrously pathetic are these crosses in life! Here was he knight, ready and eager to make his way at the lady's shrine; and the lady herself, frightened and ashamed, and repented at the unthought encouragement she had already given, was flying the country at the rate of twenty miles an hour, little dreaming that the words she would have given her ears to hear, were trembling on the tip of her lover's tongue. I could find it in my heart to laugh at Mr. Oliver, as he sat there, mute and grave, listening to the bar-maid's story of "how the lady flew upstairs all of a sudden, packed up her things in her own self, and was off in a jiffy, leaving them all in a illustration, like."

"That will do, thank you," said Mr. Oliver, at last; and putting a piece of silver in her hand, he rode away again. Where? He scarcely knew or cared at that moment; but the brown cob, like a wise beastie, struck into the road that led toward home.

CHAPTER V. A SAD, BRAVE GOOD-BY.

"Take this kiss upon the brow!
And in parting give me your hand,
That much let me say to you.
You are wrong, who deem
That my days have been a dream;
Yet if hope has flown away
In a night, or in a day,
In a vision, or in none,
I have never been alone;
All that we see or seem
Is but a dream within a dream."

—EDGAR A. POE.

"DUPED—foiled—laughed at once again!" was Mr. Oliver's mental comment on the tale he had heard at Stoney Cross. "It was a trap, of course, set for me by Miss Marchmont—a trap for my vanity, and I was too blind to see it. How she will laugh when she hears how eagerly I caught at the bait! By Jove! I can't bear it. I must show her that I am not the idiot she makes me to be. And there is but one way of doing that. I must marry; I must take no flirting city belle to make a further laughing-stock of her literary husband. I must have some one who will love me dearly—who will give me the first freshness of an untried life—an untried heart. I should be madder than a March hare if I looked for such a thing in London: the search would be as hopeless as that of Diogenes with his lantern. But Kitty—God bless her!—Kitty can give me all I ask; and she shall. And so, Miss Marchmont, adieu!"

He waved his hand, as if in farewell, and burst into the refrain:

"He turned his right and round about,
Upon the Irish shore,
With adieu forevermore, my love,
Adieu forevermore."

But it died upon his lips, and he rode toward the cottage in a silent mood.

Kitty was watching again at the open window. There is something pathetic, sweet in her watching and waiting for him to ride up to the gate! She was down before he had time to dismount, gazing at him with eyes that spoke the sweetest words. Dinner was just over, and she had dressed herself for the afternoon in her pretty pink print, with a clean collar and a rose in her dark hair. Mr. Oliver looked at her wistfully. Her artless welcome, her unaffected joy, her undisguised admiration, fell like sooth-

ing balm upon his wounded pride—his aching heart.

"Kitty," he said, "may I come in for a little while? I feel tired, and lonely, and ill."

The bright face softened.

"Oh, yes—if you please. Aunt Sarah is here; but you won't mind her?"

"Not at all. Can we send the horse back to the inn?"

"Father will take it when he goes to his work. Pray, come in, sir."

He obeyed. Mrs. Brown greeted him warmly—so did the old father. His horse was led away, and he himself was established near the window, in the arm-chair with a pillow smoothed by Kitty's hands behind his aching head. Now, and then he closed his eyes, and the little forest brook, and the tall figure of Miss Marchmont, rose before him. He opened them, and lo! the little garden outside, with its late blooming flowers, and small holly tree; and, within, the cheerful fire, the tidy room, the anxious, kindly faces—all for him. Kitty's soft voice in his ear—Kitty's little hands bathing his throbbing temples—Kitty's dark eyes fixed upon him with such watchful love.

He was—and he is!" replied the young man, with bitter emphasis. "And he is handsome and rich into the bargain. He can give you a splendid home and a name that every one knows. I have nothing to offer you but a poor cottage, these strong hands, this honest heart!"

"Oh, how you wrong me!" she exclaimed, with sudden energy. "It is not the home and the name I care for; it is himself! At first, it was his writings that I admired: but now, if he were a beggar in rags, I would go with him, if he asked me, work, beg, and die with him, if need be, because he is so dear—so dear to me, that I cannot find words to say what I feel!"

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what this visit means? Do you see that I am leaving you to-night, as free as it is possible for a woman to be? Do you know that I shall never look upon your face again for many a year—never see you, perhaps till you have your children at your knee? It is true, Kitty; and feeling all that I do feel, do you think I could stay here, and not all brought about? Oh, no! I do not so well, that if I am in the way of your happiness, I can stand aside and let mine go; but it must be away from here—away from the old home—away from you. And so I am going to my father's brother in London, and he will send me abroad to America. He has land there that ought to be looked after. I am fit to do that, if nothing more. So God bless you, my dear, and make you happy in your own way. You will think, sometimes, of your old playfellow, won't you, Kitty—the of the poor fellow who loved you—"

He broke down at last, and leaning his head upon her shoulder, cried like a child. Her tender little heart could not bear it. She said between her own sobs, that he should not go; and that she would try to love him once again, and be a good wife to him if he would but take her. That promise roused him—made a man of him once more!

"You are an angel—a tender, pitying angel," he said, as he took both her hands in his, and then looked down into her pale little face. "I shall take the memory of your kindness with me wherever I may go, but you shall not give up your own heart's desire for me. No, Kitty, marry him, if he is so dear, and may his wish about you come true—a long life, a happy home, and some one there to love you always. Now, God bless you, my dear; you will let me kiss you for the last time. Good-by, Kitty.

He touched her forehead lightly with his lips, and was gone. She thought she heard him sob as he closed the door. She herself sat down and cried as if her heart would break. The fire died out—the candle flickered and burned low—she shivered all over when she went up-stairs to bed. Poor little Kitty! It was the last time she had ever grieved or pained any one in her short life; and to grieve William was the worst of all. Her earliest playmate, her kind friend, the child's sweethearts, the girl's protector, the maiden's lover—oh, it was unpardonable! She wept herself to sleep with the bitterest tears those sweet dark eyes had ever known.

CHAPTER VI.

A GIRL'S ILLUSION.

I stand amidst the roar
Of the tempest-tormented shore,
And I hold within my hand
Grains of the golden sand.
How few! Yet how they creep
Through my fingers like a dream,
While I weep! while I weep!
Oh, God! can I not grasp
Them with a tighter clasp?
Oh, God! can I not save
One from the tempest's wave?
It is all we see or seem
But a dream within a dream?

—EDGAR A. POE.

At three o'clock the next morning, William Hill came out of his own little cottage, and closing the door carefully behind him, in order that he might not disturb his still sleeping housekeeper, set off down the road in the direction of Kitty's home. His preparations for the journey had all been made, his luggage was to follow him to London, and he himself was to walk over to Lyndhurst to breakfast and catch the early express train. He had said good-bye to his housekeeper, the favorite sound, and nut-brown horse, before he slept. There remained but one last farewell, and then he was free!

The church clock struck the half-hour, as he came in sight of Kitty's home. Serene, in a light-colored sky, shone the yellow moon; her light falling with the softest beams (it seemed to him) around the hallowed spot where his love was sleeping. He paused beside the old wooden stile, where Kitty had so often lingered on summer evenings, long gone by, to listen to his loving sketches of their future home; he leaned against her favorite seat and looked up at her latticed window with a bitter groan. His simple soul was suddenly by the blow that had fallen so suddenly—his loyal, loving heart could scarcely comprehend how suddenly it must be. The most beautiful, the most intellectual woman on earth could never have tempted him from his allegiance. Venus and Minerva together would have been colossi in his eyes, by little Kitty. How differently she must have felt for him all the while, since the first word, the first look of this hated stranger had drawn her heart away!

Poor William! It was indeed a bitter draught to drink. Jealousy is as cruel as the grave, and when it is well founded—when your rival is handsome, clever, richer, and more agreeable than you—when compared with him or her, you are mentally, morally, and physically a dwarf, a pigmy—it does not by any means take from the weight of your love. The feeling has its rise only in self-love and wounded pride—we all know that, but while self-love and pride are born with us, and remain with us till we die, I do not see how we are to escape these pangs, except by loving no one very deeply. The saints of olden times, who came as near perfection as poor human nature can ever hope to come, may have laid aside their self-will and self-love so entirely as positively to rejoice in sights and humiliations; but I question much, if, in the nineteenth century, any heart can be found that (however much all outward manifestations of feeling may be hidden) will, in a case like this, draw back with honest meekness, and let another be worthy of its prize. Conscious, it may be, of that other's worth, and its own imperfections, all the while, yet inwardly pained and wronged, and deeply resentful when the beloved object grows conscious, too! Ah, no; whatever we may be to the world and to ourselves, we all want to be first and foremost in the estimation of the one! We all echo Montrose's egotistical song,

"As Alexander I will reign,
And I will reign alone,
My thoughts did evermore disdain
A rival on the throne."

It is selfish, it is wrong, it is laughable, perhaps, but also it is very natural. Just one little kingdom—one little world, where we may reign, and "bear like the bark, no brother on the throne." This is the common desire and the common right of every son and daughter of Adam. But people do not always find their desires granted, or their rights maintained in this world, as we learn to our cost. When we find that the kingdom has revolted or been stolen treacherously away—when we see the "conquering hero" marching in with banners flying, drums beating, trumpets sounding, to take possession of his loyal province, while we, who once owned, or thought we owned it, are fain to creep through the victorious procession and hide ourselves in shame and grief before its walls—is it strange, after all, that the tumult of our thoughts points rather to angry revenge than to meek submission?

I think, and am cherishing certain pangs which I myself underwent in my younger and more impressionable days, I feel inclined to sympathize with this poor young farmer, when, understanding but vaguely yet resenting keenly those qualities in his rival which had won Kitty's heart, all his pain, and agony, and fever of wounded love and pride culminated in unmitigated wrath against Francis Oliver, the man who, with so many gifts, so many blessings to many to love him, had come there to steal the one little ewe-lamb, the poor man's sole possession. In no spirit of profanity did he make the comparison. He had never read the passage without an involuntary tongue of execration, and now she was forever lost to him. He could not hate her, he could not wish harm to her; but woe to the one who had crossed his path, if by any chance they met! And then, glancing once more toward the modest little chamber, he laid his head upon the stile, and burst into tears.

So it went on—the old story—the old grief, which every one knows by experience, better than words can tell! First tears, then anger, then wild reproaches, then tears again—frantic and useless stirrings against what was, and what was to be, while the "still" moon looked calmly on his pain! The clock struck four. He turned for a moment before he left the stile to gaze over the fair expanse of country on which the moon smiled down. He never saw it again, so some passing day-dream, but every little hill and undulation, valley and brook, and brook, and flower, and all of all, that rustic cottage with its lattice windows and vine-wreathed porch, was stamped ineffaceably on his brain, and many a time, years afterward, in his Western home, that quiet moonlight shone, and the English village and the church upon the hill rose up vividly before him, and he sickened at the memory, and prayed in vain for rest and peace from its haunting presence. For his was one of those unfortunate natures that can never forget, or forgive, the past.

A week later he sailed for America. And little upon her shoulder, cried like a child. Her tender little heart could not bear it. She said between her own sobs, that he should not go; and that she would try to love him once again, and be a good wife to him if he would but take her. That promise roused him—made a man of him once more!

"You are an angel—a tender, pitying angel," he said, as he took both her hands in his, and then looked down into her pale little face. "I shall take the memory of your kindness with me wherever I may go, but you shall not give up your own heart's desire for me. No, Kitty, marry him, if he is so dear, and may his wish about you come true—a long life, a happy home, and some one there to love you always. Now, God bless you, my dear; you will let me kiss you for the last time. Good-by, Kitty.

He touched her forehead lightly with his lips, and was gone. She thought she heard him sob as he closed the door. She herself sat down and cried as if her heart would break. The fire died out—the candle flickered and burned low—she shivered all over when she went up-stairs to bed. Poor little Kitty! It was the last time she had ever grieved or pained any one in her short life; and to grieve William was the worst of all. Her earliest playmate, her kind friend, the child's sweethearts, the girl's protector, the maiden's lover—oh, it was unpardonable! She wept herself to sleep with the bitterest tears those sweet dark eyes had ever known.

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Through my fingers like a dream,
While I weep! while I weep!
Oh, God! can I not grasp
Them with a tighter clasp?
Oh, God! can I not save
One from the tempest's wave?
It is all we see or seem
But a dream within a dream?

—EDGAR A. POE.

He then wild reproaches, then tears again—frantic and useless stirrings against what was, and what was to be, while the "still" moon looked calmly on his pain! The clock struck four. He turned for a moment before he left the stile to gaze over the fair expanse of country on which the moon smiled down. He never saw it again, so some passing day-dream, but every little hill and undulation, valley and brook, and brook, and flower, and all of all, that rustic cottage with its lattice windows and vine-wreathed porch, was stamped ineffaceably on his brain, and many a time, years afterward, in his Western home, that quiet moonlight shone, and the English village and the church upon the hill rose up vividly before him, and he sickened at the memory, and prayed in vain for rest and peace from its haunting presence. For his was one of those unfortunate natures that can never forget, or forgive, the past.

A week later he sailed for America. And little upon her shoulder, cried like a child. Her tender little heart could not bear it. She said between her own sobs, that he should not go; and that she would try to love him once again, and be a good wife to him if he would but take her. That promise roused him—made a man of him once more!

"You are an angel—a tender, pitying angel," he said, as he took both her hands in his, and then looked down into her pale little face. "I shall take the memory of your kindness with me wherever I may go, but you shall not give up your own heart's desire for me. No, Kitty, marry him, if he is so dear, and may his wish about you come true—a long life, a happy home, and some one there to love you always. Now, God bless you, my dear; you will let me kiss you for the last time. Good-by, Kitty.

He touched her forehead lightly with his lips, and was gone. She thought she heard him sob as he closed the door. She herself sat down and cried as if her heart would break. The fire died out—the candle flickered and burned low—she shivered all over when she went up-stairs to bed. Poor little Kitty! It was the last time she had ever grieved or pained any one in her short life; and to grieve William was the worst of all. Her earliest playmate, her kind friend, the child's sweethearts, the girl's protector, the maiden's lover—oh, it was unpardonable! She wept herself to sleep with the bitterest tears those sweet dark eyes had ever known.

CHAPTER VI.

A GIRL'S ILLUSION.

I stand amidst the roar
Of the tempest-tormented shore,
And I hold within my hand
Grains of the golden sand.
How few! Yet how they creep
Through my fingers like a dream,
While I weep! while I weep!
Oh, God! can I not grasp
Them with a tighter clasp?
Oh, God! can I not save
One from the tempest's wave?
It is all we see or seem
But a dream within a dream?

—EDGAR A. POE.

"And you must only see him when your aunt is with you."

"Very well, father."

There was a short silence. The old man looked perplexed and puzzled.

"Child, I wish your mother had lived," he said at last, laying his hand fondly on her dark hair. "You are growing very like her; you are too pretty to be left alone; and I do not know how to guide you as she would. Remember your mother, and your mother's God, my dear; that is the best advice I can give you. And don't break my heart, Kitty, in my old age; don't let me have to meet her in heaven, and tell her that her only child—her darling child—has done anything wrong!"

His voice trembled, his eyes were filled with tears, and he snatched up his hat, and left the house without another word. Kit, his son, watched him as he went out into the narrow garden path; and then her thoughts turned, with fond regret, toward the beloved one, who, through her intercession, was safe from all blame and rebuke. What did it matter how much she might have to bear, so he was unmolested—what were all the unkind words and bitter reproaches, so they did not fall upon her ear?

She went about her daily work, no longer singing, it is true, but with a heart that was once more at ease. The momentary strain of suspense was over; the worst was known and—what was more—forgiven! She was free to act for herself—free to be happy, if she could, and in her own way. And even aunt Betsy, coming in later in the day, with a load of wild onions and radishes, and the news of William Hill's departure, found herself checked and silenced, as hurried to rejoice in the beauty of the opening day, the singing of the birds, the familiar village sounds, when poor William was so many miles away; yet she could not help it; and the farmer, coming home to breakfast, found her "lilting" merrily as she made the tea, about the lassie who "had the yowes to the knowes" in company with her shepherd swain.

The old man sat down to his simple meal with a roguish smile.

"You seem very happy, Kitty," he remarked. "I thought how it would be when I heard William go away so late last night. Have you said your last words as lovers; and is the day fixed for next week instead of three months hence? I am afraid that her spirit had joyously in the sunlight of liberty—she was free! And even aunt Betsy, coming in later in the day, with a load of wild onions and radishes, and the news of William Hill's departure, found herself checked and silenced, as hurried to rejoice in the beauty of the opening day, the singing of the birds, the familiar village sounds, when poor William was so many miles away; yet she could not help it; and the farmer, coming home to breakfast, found her "lilting" merrily as she made the tea, about the lassie who "had the yowes to the knowes" in company with her shepherd swain.

"It is time you want?"

"Reckon I've been sayin' so enough."

"See here, my boy," said the gentleman. "Your money is out on interest, and there will be nothing due for six months. I have already advanced you twenty-five dollars from my own pocket."

"Dunno nothing 'bout interest," said Pete.

"I'm making tracks straight for California, and maybe you'll not see me for two years to come. Maybe never. I want a hundred and fifty, flat down, and I'm bound to have it; that's wuss. Reckon it's my five thousand. You kin keep the balance if I don't come for it."

"It is out of my hands, Pete. All I can get is the interest, and that not till it is due. However, if you can show me in the need of it, I may advance the sum you require."

"Mayo I've been a bit too fast," said Pete, through whose mind a sense of the gentleman's meaning began to creep. "Hope I ain't been impudent."

"A little hasty, Pete," said his guardian, smiling. "Let me hear your reasons for needin' this money."

Pete, with some mental reservation, gave his objects with sufficient fullness to convince the gentleman that it was no mere boyish whim to spend money that possessed him. He finally agreed to advance him the money, with the proviso that he should assist him in making the necessary purchases.

To this Pete readily assented. He had, in fact, no definite idea of the requisites to a journey across the plains, except that he wanted a rifle and a revolver. His mind was filled with some indefinite notion of fighting his way to California. He left everything else to his guardian, but he fancied that he was a better judge of "shooting-irons" himself, and was bound to select his own weapons.

An hour's walk from the town brought him to the banks of a broad, majestic river. It was the Missouri, which here constituted the border between the civilized life of the old settled States, and the mighty wilderness beyond.

A ferry-boat soon placed him on the western side of this liquid border, and on the soil of the Territory of Kansas.

It had been late in the afternoon when he started from Independence, and night was now rapidly approaching. Pete obtained lodgings for himself and dog in a public house on the western shore of the river.

The next day dawned fresh and clear, a charming September morning. The sun had only fairly risen when Pete had dispatched his breakfast, given Nicodemus the picking of some tempting bones, and was ready again for his journey.

The boy looked born for the plains as he trod, with a firm step, down the hard earth road, made by the broad wheels of countless emigrant wagons.

His clear, gleaming eye and handsome face were full of hopeful anticipation of stirring adventures.

The fur cap set jauntily upon his head, the well-fitting borderer's suit that set off his fine figure to advantage, the wide-topped boots into which his pants were thrust, the heavy knapsack on his shoulders, and the light rifle which he bore in his right hand, gave him a picturesque appearance that suited well with his enterprise.

Nicodemus trotted on at his heels with a look as if he did not quite understand what his master was after, and was not satisfied with this enforced ignorance.

"Don't look so downhearted, Nick," said Pete, encouragingly. "It's all in a lifetime, old dog. If you're out of spirits now, I reckon on you'll give up the ghost afore you get to California. Didn't you have lively pickin's for breakfast, he, Nicodemus?"

The dog barked in reply.

"You know you had, you cutie old rascal. If you don't git your grub for dinner jist talk

the unbroken prairie spread to the limits of the horizon, covered now with a magnificent wealth of flowers, the wide expanse of nature's rarest beauty only marred by the narrow line of the emigrant trail.

He got few lifts that day, but trudged on with unconquerable spirit.

This part of Kansas was well watered, and he crossed the valleys of several large and a number of small streams. At this season of the year they ran very low, some of the beds being nearly empty, and there was no difficulty in crossing.

Almost all the woodland of the country lay along these streams, fringes of elm and cottonwood marking their course for miles across the prairie.

Between the streams the wide plain, covered with its exquisite carpet, ran in long inundations, rising and falling like successive waves of a tidal sea.

A third day broke on Pete and Nicodemus still trudging westward. The dog had accommodated himself to the situation, though he still wore an injured expression.

Pete's determination was still unconquerable; but two days of incessant travel, with a heavy weight on his shoulders, had taken some of the vim out of him, and he walked on in silence.

Thus until near noon they passed through almost unbroken solitude, the ranches now being very few, while the single emigrant wagons had almost vanished.

They were nearing that point where travelers had to band together for protection from possible Indian raids. However peaceful appearing, the red-men of the plains were not to be trusted without a good show of force.

"Tell you what it is, Nicodemus," said Pete, at length; "dunno what you think about it, but it's my notion that this thing's about played. We kin make ten mile a day more than that mule-train, Nick, and that'll soon count. But I don't see no sort of use wearin' my legs out when there's plenty of horses about. There weren't less than a hundred at that last ranch. Only got ten dollars left, dorg, and that won't buy a hoss, and I've been bring up too pious to steal one. But you kin say what you please, Nicodemus, I'm bound to have a hoss."

The dog barked and ran eagerly ahead, his nose in the air.

"Hello! what's up, Nick?" cried Pete, looking eagerly forward.

As he did he saw two graceful animals which had been grazing on the prairie before him, take alarm and bound off at a wonderful pace.

Pete looked after them with astonished eyes.

"They ain't buffaloes, that's certain," he said. "Nor they ain't prairie dogs. Wonder if they're their antelopes that fellow bashed there talked about."

The agile animals flew on like the wind, and soon disappeared behind the wooded border of a stream.

There were numerous birds flitting and singing about, and the boy's senses, in love with nature as he had always been, took in with delight these scenes of beauty.

But a new impulse was roused in him as the uneasy dog started up some larger birds, which flew with a heavy flight away from him.

With the instinct of the sportsman he brought the rifle to his shoulder, glanced along the sights, and pulled the trigger.

It was a quick and doubtful shot, as the birds were more than fifty yards distant, and flying rapidly.

But Pete, young as he was, had had long practice with the rifle. His quick, true eye had taken deadly aim. The bird fell with a dull thud to the ground.

The well-trained dog flew to pick up the game, while Pete, with his sportsman's habits, hastened to reload his rifle.

Nicodemus brought in a bird utterly unknown to Pete. It was a large, mottled bird, of the size of a chicken, with what seemed a pair of small, extra wings on its neck, and a slight crest on its head.

"Not a bad shot that," cried a voice near him, as he stood weighing the bird in his hand.

Pete turned hastily, to see beside him a man on horseback, who had approached unobserved during his preoccupation.

He was a tall, muscular man, with heavily-bearded face. A long rifle lay across the saddle before him. His right hand held the bridle of a led horse.

"Wasn't a bad shot for a boy," he repeated, "to bring down a prairie hen, at that distance, on the wing."

"This is a prairie hen, is it?" asked Pete, holding up the bird.

"Sartainly. Don't know much about these diggin's, boy, or you wouldn't ask that. Where away? You're a young one to be out of sight of the settlements alone."

"I'm goin' to put myself further out of sight then," said Pete. "I'm bound for California."

"'Wheh!" whistled the new-comer, with a gesture of surprise.

"I'm after a train that's forty or fifty miles ahead," said Pete.

"S'pect to catch it afoot? The Injuns will gobble you up, as shooting boy. Best turn tail and make a bee-line for the settlements. The red-skins are raising 'hunder ahead."

"I kin hit an Injin on the wing as well as a prairie chicken," said Pete, boldly. "I'm goin' ahead if there's ten war-parties on the trail. Why don't you turn back yourself?"

"Me!" and the man laughed as if highly amused. "Me turn back for Injuns? Why, boy, they're my regular diet. I generally abolish a dozen of the rascals to get up my appetite for dinner. I'm Bill Grubb, the scout. Mought have heard of me."

"Can't say as I have," answered Pete. "I'm Picayune Pete. Maybe you mought have heerd tell of me."

"You're a young hoss, Pete. I'll bet that," said the scout, laughing. "Good on the trigger, and got the right spirit in you. Goin' West myself, and wouldn't mind havin' you for company. What do you want with the train ahead?"

Pete, who had been greatly taken with the honest face and free manner of the scout, made no hesitation in relating his object.

"Cording to your story there's devility afoot," said the scout. "Now I'm death on devility. Got a spare hoss here, Pete, which I was goin' to leave at the next ranch. Hop up, my lively youngster. Kind of took a likin' to you. Guess you and I will ride pack, for a day or two anyhow. That your dog?"

"I bet. He's some guns of a dorg, too. Ain't many such dorgs. Speak out for yourself, Nicodemus."

The dog barked loudly in response. He looked up at their new friend as if he felt that he might be trusted.

"He'll do," said the scout. "Let him trot after. Hop up."

Pete needed no second invitation. With the bound of a young athlete he was in an instant on the horse's back.

Grasping the reins, and laying his rifle and game before him, he was ready for the road.

CHAPTER XVII.

RED-SKINS AND RIFLES!

THE two new friends jogged on together with a friendliness that soon became intimacy. The scout was amused by the shrewdness and odd ways of the boy, and found himself liking him more and more with every mile of their journey.

Pete had been dreaming all his days of wild life in the West, and to find himself now the companion of a real scout, and bound to that western land where adventures and dangers are thick as blackberries, was an experience that made him unusually garrulous and jovial.

Even Nicodemus seemed to think it more respectable to follow a horse than a footman, and trotted on contentedly. His late adventure with the prairie hen may have given him self-satisfaction.

The scout's horses were good stock, and they made excellent time over the hard-trodden earth road which had been made by countless emigrant wagons.

As they went Pete's tongue ran on as rapidly. He was not long in acquainting Bill Grubb, his new friend, with the circumstances that had led to his present enterprise, including all the particulars of the abduction.

"What did you say the fellow's name is that's with her?" asked the scout.

"William Denton. He's a first cousin of hers."

"And the chap that ran away with her. What was his autograph?"

"He called himself Kurnell Green. Dunno if that were his name."

"Colonel Green, eh? And a born devil out-and-out. I know him, Pete, like a breeze. And I don't owe him no good wishes, neither. He was in Independence last week."

"Ha!" cried Pete. "See him there?"

"Bet I did! Mought have had a little skirmish with him too, only he slid somewhere. The rascal's got a dozen faces, and twenty names. Wouldn't wonder if he were with the train now, under false colors."

"What for?" asked Pete, with a startled look.

"See here, my boy, I'm a man of the world, and know what stuff men are made of. I will give you a lesson in human nature. Suppose this young one was put out of the way, who'd be the next relation to her father?"

"William Denton, so far as I've heard," answered Pete.

"The old man's made mints of money, you say, and it's like he's worn himself out doing it. S'pose now his darter would drop off, and then he'd drop off. Wouldn't this fellow step in for the cash?"

"Reckon so," said Pete.

"Bound to, Pete," continued the scout. "You can be high that's what the chap's working for. He's got the right help, too, in Colonel Green. The hound's a deeper devil than any Sioux or Cheyenne on the plains. Now see here: they made a desperate effort, and fell through."

"Picayune Pete and Nicodemus was around," muttered the boy.

"I'll go a buffalo that Colonel Green is with the train now. The two rascals have got their heads together. There ain't no Toledo round here. It's easy to lose a little gal; and there's only the red Injuns to pick her up, if she 'scapes the wolves."

"Dumno 'bout that," said the boy. "Picayune Pete and Nicodemus is around."

The man laughed at the combined conceit and earnestness in Pete's tone.

"Think a little chap like you can do anything ag'in two seasoneds hounds like these?" he asked.

"I kin try," said Pete. "Hard tryin' ain't to be sneezed at. I kin hit a man's head at a hundred yards with a rifle. A man that can't do better than that ain't no better than me. I've got a dorg, here, too, that's some guns of a dorg. Nicodemus ain't very showy, but he's death on a scot. Whether it's a two-legged or a four-legged critter, he's the dorg. I'm a-talkin' bout you, Nick."

The dog gave his usual answer, barking and capering about the horse's heels.

"You're two to two then," said the scout, "and a good nose and a sure eye goes for something. But I'm afraid you've a hard row to hoe."

"I've got more than that," said Pete.

"What is it, then?" asked the scout.

"I've got a pard that's with three like me. I've got Bill Grubb."

The scout laughed, then struck his hand in Pete's.

"I'm your hoss, Pete," he said. "I don't love the colonel."

For mile after mile the two comrades journeyed on the strong, experienced scout and the slight, earnest lad. For day after day they pursued their route through beautiful but monotonous scenery. Their nights were passed at the adobe dwellings of daring settlers—half fort, half habitation; or were spent in the mild air of the open prairie.

Their meals were made off the diminishing contents of Pete's knapsack, or from fresh game shot in the day's journey. Nicodemus was alert at stirring up provender for the quick rifle of his master. The scout forebore to use his weapon, leaving the boy every chance to improve in skill.

The valleys of the Big and Little Blue and of the Sandy were passed. The borders of Kansas were crossed and Nebraska entered. At length they entered the wide valley of the Platte, and the broad, shallow river, up which for many miles their route was to lay, was spread before them.

The rich soil of the prairies had now changed to a sandy earth, covered with thin, sparse grass. They were at last on the old plains, the "Great American Desert" of old geographers.

Leaving Fort Kearney in their rear, they struck out along the Platte. Days of monotonous journeying succeeded, over the thinly-clad soil and in sight of the sand-hills of this great river.

Pete was daily growing more versed in frontier life and border duty, by the interesting tales with which the scout beguiled the way, and the useful instruction which this experienced companion gave him.

They had now reached the buffalo country, and the northward trail of these giant animals was visible everywhere around them, but Pete strained his eager eyes in vain against the horizon for a sight of one of these huge creatures. He was anxious to draw a bead on larger game than he had yet essayed.

These glances at length brought him other objects than those he looked for. White, moving objects were visible against the horizon.

Rejoining him, Pete gave reins and heels to his horse, and the two strong animals moved on at a rattling pace.

"Don't see it," was Pete's remark, at length. "They crossed the trail," said Bill. "I saw the hoof-marks of their ponies plain, back there. Ride a bit out to the left."

Pete obeyed. About a hundred yards out from the trail his eye caught that which sent the blood pulsing in quick waves through his veins.

It was the tracks of a troop of unshod horses faintly impressed upon the sandy soil.

"Here they go, due west," cried Pete.

"Plum after our California friends," replied Bill. "No use to follow their trail. We must let out on the emigrant track."

Rejoining him, Pete gave reins and heels to his horse, and the two strong animals moved on at a rattling pace.

"When hardly a word they rode mile after mile and hour after hour. Noon had long passed, evening was approaching, yet the horizon ahead was still the same unbroken line.

"It's a dangerous lake for the man who is thirsty, and deceitful ships for the man who

would sail," replied the scout. "That's the mirage, boy. I've seen it make the queerest things out of a sand-hill or buffalo, and miles of water out of a green level. It's very like to cheat young eyes, but I've been there too often."

"And that's not water?" asked Pete in surprise.

"Not a bit of it. Nor are those ships."

"What are they, then?"

"They are the canvas covers of Joe English's wagons. We'll fetch up with them before dark."

"And if I git Minnie Ellis under my eyes ag'in I'll bet two cows I'll fling the kernal, let alone the smooth devil that's backin' him up," cried Pete, joyfully.

The scout was right. The brisk-stepping wagons soon brought the wagons into easy view. An hour before sundown the two travelers rode into the train.

This advent created a considerable confusion in the long train, that seemed to stretch for a quarter-mile along the road.

It was an unexpected break in the monotony of a long journey, and the teamsters crowded round the travelers, asking a hundred questions.

Many of them knew Bill Grubb, and greetings resounded on all sides. Past the white-topped wagons, heavily laden with goods, and drawn each by a string of mules, Bill and the boy rode on.

Near the head of the train walked a stalwart, roughly-dressed man, brandishing a long whip in his hand, while a brace of pistols in his belt proved him ready for more perilous work than driving mules.

"Joe English!" cried the scout, holding out his hand.

"Bill Grubb, or I'm a sinner!" roared the leader. "Where away, Bill? Jump off your horseflesh. Don't know anybody I keer to see more than you. We're going to camp in a mile more. You've got to spend the night with us."

"Can't say," replied Bill, as he sprang from his horse. "Friend of mine here that's looking for somebody in your train."

"Who? This pullet?" asked Joe, roughly. "What do you want, little one? Is it a man, woman or mule? Let's hear from you."

"It ain't neither," said Pete.

"What then? That's all we've got here."

"You're too rough-spoken, Joe. That's my friend, I told you. You ought to know what that means. It is a little gal he's after."

"Ain't got none," growled Joe.

"Where?" cried Pete, with a sinking at the heart. "Don't want to say that you ain't got a little yaller-haired gal, that they call Minnie Ellis, with you?"

"Ain't got none," repeated Joe.

"Where is she, then?" asked Bill. "She left Independence in your train."

"You're right there, Bill," was the answer. "I'm bound to go right through Josi's sheep paster, an' you know our old wether, don't ya? I sent him that way, 'cause I thought mebbe the old sheep'd like some fun."

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Sunshine Papers.

Of the Path Matrimonial.

Not long since, at the end of a charming love-story, I found this sentiment expressed in connection with a young lady who had failed to secure a position she desired; but in its place had gained a husband—"she knew that the other was welcome to the position, forever, for there was nevermore sought for her but love, and ease, and her lover-husband."

Of course, in a love-story, this sounded excessively nice as a terminus to all the heroine's trouble; but I could not help wondering if the talented author who wrote thus was inweaving in these words a life-experience of her own, or of any one whom she had known. Can it be, thought I, that one woman among my sisterhood has lived a life so exceptional among women, so smiled upon by the Fates, as to say from the depths of her own marital experience, to other women, that wedlock holds for young maidens but love, and ease, and lover-husbands? If not—if she is only one of us world of women who know that ever so joyless a maidenhood rarely holds the trials that must come to the wife and mother—is it not a mistaken doctrine to preach to a working-girl audience, concerning a working-girl heroine, that marriage is but a pathway to love, and ease, and chivalrous devotion?

It seems to me that already too many false ideas obtain concerning marriage. That already our American youths look too lightly upon this holy sacrament, or regard it too entirely as the gateway to greater freedom, ease and self-indulgence—that already hasty and ill-advised marriages—marriages based upon the most exaggerated and unreal ideas—are too rife among us. Does it not, then, behoove us who wield a pen that will be potent for good or evil among thousands of readers, especially when we write to a class, of the workings of society within that class, not to permeate their minds with utterly erroneous ideas? Is it wise for us to represent to young women that marriage is all moonshine and sentiment?

Dear girl readers, not for one instant would I utter a word that should put an end to your dreams of future wifehood. Neither would I willingly detract from

their roseate coloring; but if your castles in the air be a trifle less golden now, for your knowledge of the truth, the result may save you from such bitter pain as would surely be yours, were you to build them upon such insecure foundations as that when the day shall come that finds you with all your future staked upon them, they shall fade utterly. Dream as tenderly as you choose of future wifehood and motherhood, but do not flatter yourself that when you leave your maidenhood behind you, to enter these newer spheres, you will find therein only a devoted husband, an easy life, and cherubic offspring.

Bless you, my dears! marry you never so fascinating a lover, or even be you, as is most unlikely, the two out of a thousand who marry rather out of their sphere and make what is popularly called—where there is considerable money in the case—"a good match," you will not find your future a paradise. There will be times when the best of husbands will be moody or cross; when the best of babies will moan all night or shriek all day; when the best of servants will leave on short notice, or prove wholly unattainable; when the best-ordered house, and the best-regulated business, and the best-governed temper will meet with vexations. And if any damsel is dreaming of a lover-husband, pray let her be warned in time that, though there does, occasionally, such a creature exist outside of a sentimental book, he is a man at all worthy of a woman's worship he will be, also, a man who will often need the help of a woman's hand and mind, the sympathy of a woman's heart, and the care and comfort and soothing of a woman's tender ways; for, where the marriage is a love-marriage, the wife must expect little ease, and be ready to claim no more petting, nor help, nor sympathy, nor indulgence, from her husband than she is willingly ready to bestow. Even in the early months of marriage it is no easy task for two lives and dispositions to harmoniously accord—supplementing, one the other, with patient forbearance and unselfishness, until the two become, truly, "one twain."

To the true woman, marriage indeed represents love and happiness; but, it will be love and happiness gained through self-renunciation, burden-bearing, and the mutual sympathy of two loyal but erring, and therefore human hearts. A PARSON'S DAUGHTER.

FIRESIDE FANCIES.

THE good old open fireplaces, with their blazing wood-fires, are about fading out of existence, and with their decease will die out much of comfort, enjoyment and romance, for there was a great deal of romance in them. Bright and brilliant castles have been built in them; bright and glesome fairies seemed to dance among the sparks; the old logs were like giants, gaunt and grim, whom the fairies of fire delighted to torment. When the twilight was fast deepening into dark—what old folks style "blind man's holiday?"—it was cozy to draw one's big arm-chair before the fire and give way to pleasant visions and fireside fancies, and shape pictures and faces there, sometimes such as we had viewed in real life, and others like nothing earthly. Grand old castles, miniature battle scenes, wedding and funeral processions—one scene following another with as many marvelous changes as there are in the bewildering transformation pageant of a theatrical spectacle.

Then we seem to see the days of "Auld Lang Syne" when the merry men brought in the yule log for Christmas-time. Of course this takes us back to the merry days of English hospitality, for the English have always been apt to make more of the holy season than we Americans; their hearts have always seemed to enter more into the spirit of the festival. We seem to see the carol-singers going their rounds, bidding good cheer to others and singing hymns of One who came to save.

Then comes before us the picture of a baronial hall, where gallant knights and ladies gay are dancing the "stately minuet," and where lights are in such profusion as almost to turn night into day. Perhaps imagination will lead us to fancy we can see some gay courter sitting in one corner, making love to some fair maiden—telling the old, old story, so often told, so many times repeated, and which to many never seems tried or stale. There may be different styles and fashions of love-making, but it is only love after all. The words are so often repeated they must be sweet to smell and sweet to listen to. We haven't time to notice whether the knight's countenance wears a lugubrious expression because of a rejection, or is illuminated with smiles because the answer is a favorable one, ere the scene changes again.

This time we are under the earth among the mines, where numerous little lights attached to the caps of the miners send forth a dim radiance here and there. We can almost see the hardy men with pickax and shovel, digging away for life among their grimy companions, and we almost wish that diamonds were being dug for us, until we fancy our wishes are coming true, and we behold an old man, wearing the appearance of an aged god of mythology, approaching us with a diamond worth many thousands of dollars, and we are about to accept it when the big log divides in the center, and we are transported into another realm.

Now we are under the waves of the ocean, sporting among mermaids, dolphins, and such notable creatures, dancing, skipping, flying, as though we were as much at home as upon dry land. We find pretty mermaids flirting with the mermen, and the old story of love is being retold here. Everything seems happy here, and it ought to be so, because we are assured "there is no happiness where love is not." 'Tis a lesson easily learned, and few there are who have not studied the mystic book and conned its pages o'er, to learn at last that love to human and oftentimes immortal.

And when these visions have flitted by, one by one, and the fire has gone out, and caught but blackened logs remain, I don't conjure up visions of wrecked hopes, hopeless loves, wasted lives and broken hearts, or of lives that have been of brilliant prospects to die out and leave nothing but a black record behind them.

That may be very romantic, but when the fire has gone my romance has departed with it, and I take a more practical view of the case, and that is—if I would not take a violent cold by sitting fireless, I had best retire in time; so I say "good-night" to the old hearth, and feel grateful for the pleasure I have taken in my fireside fancies.

EV LAWLESS.

Foolscap Papers.

My Lecturing Tour This Winter.

It was only for recreation, and money, that I started out this winter to lecture, having prepared several intensely scientific lectures, designed expressly to be delivered before crowded houses. I was independent of the

Lecture Bureaus, and went on my own hook, so that all the money I earned I made.

My first lecture was given in the Grigsby Opera House. The night was very large. The front seats were all there, and in a row. The boxes all opened out on the stage, and were very quiet. The means of egress were ample in case of a fire, and I saw there could possibly be no danger of a jam, and everybody could get out quick, and comfortably; and the aisle was perfectly clear. There were fully one thousand seats in the house. You can form some idea of the size of the audience when I tell you that in one single row of twenty-six chairs seventeen persons were packed!! The other chairs were actually crowded—against each other. The man who filled the gallery relieved my mind by saying he thought he would be in no danger of being squeezed to death. The audience kept such breathless silence that if you had listened you could have heard a rolling-pin drop; you actually could have heard a drop of whisky-barrel. There was a brilliant assembly of gas-jets. It was a mammoth house that night, as large as ever it was; so I was informed by persons who had been in it before, and knew what they affirmed. All the back seats seemed to be reserved. One man could have actually counted the audience. As the immense remainder of the crowd was so slow coming, I got mad, and vowing I wouldn't wait for them, as there were already something over four hundred fingers and toes present, I began my lecture.

The following report in the *Morning Eye-Opener* speaks for itself, and me: "Everybody in the Opera House last night turned out to hear the lecture by Whitehorn. The lecture was very large, and the people numbered from one to seventy-five years. If we had not had a free ticket we would not have got in at all, which speaks well for the size of the crowd, indeed, and almost everybody who did not get there, missed hearing the lecture, and those present assure us that they got as much as they paid for, and a good deal more. The lecture was so good that half of it would have done, and Mr. Whitehorn fairly stirred up the audience—those whom he failed to stir up, the usher did; though there was actually no more than half the audience asleep at one time. We never heard a lecturer who could keep the crowd in such serene repose, and the chairs are very excellently cushioned there; the crowd could have staid there all night, and most of them would have done so, but the sexton said he wanted to lock up, and that they must wake up. Mr. W. is a master of the English language, and as such, puts it into any shape he pleases. His sentences are full of words, and his expressions overflow with the tones of his voice. What his theories lack in correctness they make up in incorrectness. The whole lecture was full of the finest intellectual punctuation points. Everything that was heard in the lecture reached clear to the ears, and the only thing which seemed to mar any of his fine thoughts was the snoring of noses, which only answered for applause. Four thousand citizens who staid away missed the best part of the sublime lecture. It was Mr. W.'s loss. He showed the true course of Evolution, in all its systematic changes. He pictured the frog as an egg, and the egg as a tadpole, the tadpole as a frog, and the frog as a monkey, the monkey as an ape, the ape as an orang-outang, and eventually, that animal as finely developed into a man, with no tail of bills, or mothers-in-law, and his pockets full of money. Whenever he would come to a pause the people would wake up to stamp their feet—the room was quite cold. Mr. W. is as easy to draw one's big arm-chair before the fire and give way to pleasant visions and fireside fancies, and shape pictures and faces there, sometimes such as we had viewed in real life, and others like nothing earthly. Grand old castles, miniature battle scenes, wedding and funeral processions—one scene following another with as many marvelous changes as there are in the bewildering transformation pageant of a theatrical spectacle.

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EV LAWLESS.

Topics of the Time.

—The Duke of Edinburgh wears, it is solemnly rumored, a bracelet on one wrist—a chain of gold—and is striving to set the fashion of such decoration. Our young bandbox "ladies" men, who part their hair in the middle and wear a rattan cane, will be pleased to hear this.

—George W. Bruce met a grizzly bear near Santa Cruz, Cal., and a fight began promptly. The man stabbed and shot the bear, the bear broke the man's ribs by squeezing him, and then both retreated, apparently satisfied to escape without a victory. California is the place for fun.

—A Chinaman thus explained to a reporter the object of the Celestial Order of Freemasonry: "One Chinaman—he bad—steel—he bad—put him out. S'pose Chinaman lazy—no work—put out. S'pose good—work, no steel—sick—we pay; he die, we catches box and put him in."

—A Kentucky woman is mother of eighteen children, nine having blue eyes and light hair and nine having dark eyes and dark hair. Seven of the children have married and have families, and the mother visits them yearly. While her visits continue some of the families have the blues and when her visits cease some of them nurse black eyes.

—In 1870 the Presbyterian Synod of the Pacific, embracing California, Oregon, Nevada, Washington, and Idaho Territories, reported 74 ministers and 61 churches. In 1876 it reported 130 ministers and 123 churches, has nearly doubled during that time, and they have increased the last four years at the rate of one each month.

—A young girl, now living in the Rue Voltaire, in Bordeaux, France, who was born without arms, uses her mouth in the most extraordinary manner. She can write with the greatest facility, can thread the finest needle, embroider, knit, do crochet work, mark lines, etc., with marvelous regularity, and can even with her mouth tie a sailor's knot.

—After George Washington returned from the Braddock expedition, it is known that he asked a young lady to marry him, and was refused. Mary Phillips is the name of the lady who, a century ago and more, missed the opportunity of having her picture hung upon the wall of every well-regulated home from Maine to Texas. In this instance, not Mary, but Martha, chose the better part.

—A young Baltimore man told his wife that he had received several hundred dollars of his employer's money, and she said that by close economy they could save enough to return the amount, and thus give his credit. When the sexton said he wanted to look up, and that they must wake up. Mr. W. is a master of the English language, and as such, puts it into any shape he pleases. His sentences are full of words, and his expressions overflow with the tones of his voice. What his theories lack in correctness they make up in incorrectness. The whole lecture was full of the finest intellectual punctuation points. Everything that was heard in the lecture reached clear to the ears, and the only thing which seemed to mar any of his fine thoughts was the snoring of noses, which only answered for applause. Four thousand citizens who staid away missed the best part of the sublime lecture. It was Mr. W.'s loss. He showed the true course of Evolution, in all its systematic changes. He pictured the frog as an egg, and the egg as a tadpole, the tadpole as a frog, and the frog as a monkey, the monkey as an ape, the ape as an orang-outang, and eventually, that animal as finely developed into a man, with no tail of bills, or mothers-in-law, and his pockets full of money. Whenever he would come to a pause the people would wake up to stamp their feet—the room was quite cold. Mr. W. is as easy to draw one's big arm-chair before the fire and give way to pleasant visions and fireside fancies, and shape pictures and faces there, sometimes such as we had viewed in real life, and others like nothing earthly. Grand old castles, miniature battle scenes, wedding and funeral processions—one scene following another with as many marvelous changes as there are in the bewildering transformation pageant of a theatrical spectacle.

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COASTING WITH THE GIRLS.

BY MARO O. ROLFE.

Of all the pleasures in this life,
The one that leads the rest,
One that combines the best of all,
And which I love the best—
Is coasting on a winter night.

My brain so madly whirls,
When on a lovely, moonlit eve
I'm coasting with the girls!

The snow was brightly glistening,
And flying from the sled—
I sat and gazed, and gazed it,
While Susie sat beside it;

And as we glided down the hill,
She laughed and shook her curls—
And then I thought how nice it was—
This coasting with the girls!

Some way her hand slid into mine,
Just how, I cannot tell;
And then, my arm got round her waist,
(A mystery as well);

And then I stole a kiss
From gleaming Susie Searles;

And thought how *very* pleasant 'twas—
This coasting with the girls!

I think I quite forgot the sled,
And where it ought to go;
For when I got my senses back—
(And they came pretty slow)

I found that I was in a drift,
And so was Susie Searles.

Who asked me, archly, if I liked
Such coasting with the girls!

I answered "Yes," and lifted her
Out of her bed of snow;

She lay and moaned, I laid her down:

"What made you hold me so?"

I'm sure, Phil, you were very long
In smoothing out my curls!"

I told her that 'twas ever thus

When coasting with the girls!

Of all the pleasures of my life,
The one that I loved best—

What ever in my memory dwells

Was coasting on a winter night

With pretty Susie Searles!

And if you wish such happiness,
Go coasting with the girls!

Great Captains.

BOSCAWEN

The Admiral who Always was Ready.

In Boscawen the British navy finds one of the brightest exemplars of that dogged devotion to duty which Blake instated. Afloat or ashore the true Briton answers to the injunction "England expects every man to do his *duty*" with a sturdy huzza! It was no French *clan* that led the famous Cavalry Charge at Balaklava, when the "noble Six Hundred" rode literally into the jaws of death, but a stern obedience to orders, even though those orders were known to be a mistake. It has been exemplified on land and sea in a hundred fights that a British soldier is a human machine that has no individual will, but moves, unquestioning and unmurmuring, as the master directs. Through all grades of her service implicit obedience to a superior is Her Majesty's subjects' first and last law. Indeed, the very expression—"Her Majesty's subjects"—implies as much:—every man who serves under the British flag is a subject, a servant, to a system as exacting in its demands for submission and obedience as the inflexible tyranny of the Turk. And the captain who treads a British deck, secure in his authority over every soul on his ship, owes much to Boscawen, who reduced sea discipline to an *art*, and made the seaman not an automatic man, but a piece of human mechanism that can be trusted, whenever set in motion, until it breaks.

Edward Boscawen, second son of Hugh Lord Viscount Falmouth, was born August 19th, 1711. Being a second son he, of course, was compelled to "shift for himself"—the law of primogeniture giving to the eldest son all the estate. He, therefore, entered the navy at a very early age, but did not, like Nelson, attain a captaincy before his majority. At twenty-one he was first lieutenant of the Hector frigate, and in 1740 was given the captaincy of the 20-gun ship Shoreham, of Admiral Vernon's fleet, bound for the "Spanish Main"—the American coast opposite the West India Islands. Great Britain, being then at war with Spain, was striking at the Spaniards' sea trade and crippling their commerce as the surest means of injury. Vernon's operations along the Gulf coast in 1741 resulted in a fierce sea and land attack on Puerto Bello, or the Isthmus of Darien, in which Boscawen performed brilliant service; and at the siege of Cartagena, which soon followed, he led a body of sailors in an assault on a shore battery of fifteen 24-pounders, over a field exposed to the raking fire of another battery. The tars, cutlass in hand, scaled the fascines and won the battery. In the attack on the Boca Chica forts Lord Beauclerc being killed, Boscawen succeeded in the command of his fine ship—the Prince Frederick, of 70 guns.

These exploits gave the captain considerable home celebrity. The fleet having returned to England (1742), he was honored by an election to the Commons, from Truro, in Cornwall—the not uncommon method of expressing popular regard for the successful sea or land captain. Boscawen also married the same year, and proposed to "settle down" as a gentleman commoner, but the war with France brought every naval officer to his post. George II. had, by his interference in continental affairs, encouraged the French to the favorite scheme of an "invasion" of England, and in support of "the Pretender's" claim to the crown of England and Scotland, a powerful land and naval force organized for a descent on the English coast. Admirals Rowley, Morris and Warren were on the alert, with all the available English naval force, and so busily employed the French, along their own coasts, as to put them almost wholly on the defense. Boscawen, taking command of the Dreadnaught, of 60 guns, met the French frigate Medea in April (1744), and after a brilliant action of nearly two hours, captured the Frenchman, and bore his prize with 800 prisoners into Spithead. It was the first capture from the French that year, and gave Boscawen additional popularity. The commander of the Medea, Captain (afterward Admiral) Hoquart, was destined to suffer the singular humiliation of falling three times into Boscawen's hands in the course of their respective careers.

No signal general engagement in this war with France occurred until in 1747, when Admiral Anson's squadron met the French off Cape Finisterre. Boscawen, as Captain of the Namur, of 74 guns, then greatly distinguished himself. Ten French ships-of-war were captured. Boscawen was wounded by a musket ball in the shoulder in his close quarter combat with his antagonist, whose ship he carried, eventually, by boarding.

These services were followed by his promotion to be rear admiral of the blue, and he was also made commander-in-chief of the sea and land forces sent to India. With six ships of the line, five frigates and two thousand troops he sailed for India (Nov., 1747), and appeared before Pondicherry in the hot month of July,

(1748)—two months later than had been designed, having been delayed by an exceedingly stormy passage and detentions to refit. He put his men ashore at once below Pondicherry, and proceeded to its siege, but sickness among the men, unused to such a climate, forced him to retreat to Fort St. David, from whence he had started. The enemy assailed him with fierce fury, but the retreat was admirably conducted. He then dropped down before Madras, which the French had taken in 1744 and strongly fortified. News of the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, in 1749, having reached the place as Boscawen approached, the English took peaceful occupancy of the place. The admiral returned to England to find that he had been promoted to be rear admiral of the white.

Boscawen's organizing talent having become conspicuous he was made (1751) one of the Lords of the Board of Admiralty, an elder brother of Trinity House, and was once more returned to the Commons from Truro.

He saw no further active service until 1755, when Admiral Mostyn and himself were dispatched to intercept a powerful French fleet, destined for service against the English colonies in North America. Our own "old French-Indian War" was then about to burst forth—really struggle for the possession, by France, of all the country west of the Alleghany Mountains, over which the French claimed domain by priority of discovery by Joliet, Father Marquette and La Salle. The English colonists from Virginia and Pennsylvania, overstepping the mountains, began to make surveys and settlements in the Ohio or North-west territory, as well as what is now Western Pennsylvania; whereupon the French planted a line of forts or posts from Niagara to Fort Duquesne (now Pittsburgh). This occupancy, and the pre-emptory demand of the Governor of Canada for the "Ohio Company" of trappers and traders to leave all its stations, resulted in the colonists raising troops to expel the French. This precipitated the war. Great Britain, of course, responded to the call of the colonists; their cause was her own; and a force under General Bradfrock was sent to Virginia to proceed against Fort Duquesne, while Boscawen and Mostyn, as stated, sailed for the mouth of the St. Lawrence, to intercept a fine fleet France had gathered to transport a strong force, under Baron Dieskau, to Canada. Bradfrock marched to his work only to be killed, and his little army almost destroyed. Boscawen met the French fleet off New Foundland, but so wide was the sea, and so well conducted the fleet, that most of the squadron escaped. The English succeeded in closing in with and capturing two of the French ships-of-war—Hoquart again falling into Boscawen's hands to be borne, once more, to Spithead. For this service he received the thanks of the Commons.

But Boscawen was destined to see no more service. His health broke rapidly during the year, and proceeding to his home, in the fall of 1760, he there died January 10th, 1761. A very beautiful monument, by Rysbrook, rests over his grave in Cornwall, and his name and fame are cherished with pride by all good Britons.

men, were taken aboard of the English fleet and borne as prisoners to England, while the French inhabitants were sent to France—poverty-stricken enough with the loss of all their possessions, yet too loyal to France to swear fealty to their conqueror.

This important achievement gave infinite satisfaction to the British Cabinet and served to strengthen Pitt's hands in carrying out his scheme for dispossessing France of all her American possessions—driving her not only from Canada, but from the whole Lake and Mississippi Valley country as well. Boscawen, as a fellow commoner, was voted thanks, and the House was not stinted in its support of the Ministry that had been so wise in its choice of servants.

In the succeeding year (1759), to Boscawen was committed the task of destroying the powerful French fleet commanded by De la Clue. With 14 ships-of-the-line and 7 frigates he sailed for Toulon, where the French were rendezvoused; but, touching at Gibraltar, he learned that De la Clue had passed the straits, so sailed north for his enemy, and found him in Lagos harbor. A general engagement ensued, and after a protracted and sanguinary combat the French Admiral lost five of his twelve ships. He himself was mortally wounded—both his legs being cut off by a canon shot, when his ship put into port, followed by the remaining vessels of his command.

Boscawen returned to England to receive Parliamentary thanks and a pension of £3,000 per year. He was also sworn in as a member of the Privy Council, and had the additional appointment (1760) and pay of General of the Marines. He was in high favor with Pitt, who relied greatly on his advice and opinion on matters of war. The fleet, to hold the French under surveillance, spent the summer of 1760 in the bay of Duiberon, on the west coast of France. Scourvay prevailed greatly in the fleet; whereupon Boscawen took possession of a small island in the bay, and with his own hands aided in cultivating vegetables for the sick. Though the strictest of strict disciplinarians, he had a tender heart, and never refrained from solicitude for the comfort and well-being of his comrades.

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The Red Cross;

OR,

The Mystery of Warren-Guilderland.

A ROMANCE OF THE ACCURSED COINS.

BY GRACE MORTIMER.

CHAPTER XVII.

FACE TO FACE AT LAST.

The day had passed much as other days, the young people keeping together wherever they wandered, as if one spirit animated them; but, toward the evening, Cordelia began to look rather anxiously for an opportunity to get away by herself to keep her appointment with the man who had called her mother's first, and therefore her *lawful* husband. All day long she had been haunted by the idea of this ill-omened father of hers, as her imagination presented him in ever varying characters; sometimes it was the cruelly-wronged avenger whom she shuddered to meet, sometimes the animalized villain, weary with vice and desirous of a new sensation; and then again her mind would fasten upon that clause in his letter in which he spoke of remorse and expiation, and her proud, pure heart then swelled with sympathy, forgetting to condemn. However, with the natural instinct of such a spirit, she had carefully concealed, even from the affectionate eyes of her benefactor, all sign of disquietude, desiring above all things to meet what trouble were in store for her with self-reliance and fortitude.

The Gaylure group, with their attendant intimates, were spending the afternoon in the heart of the pine thicket which nestled at the foot of the mountain behind the "Alhambra." The spiny pine, the unseen ocean, and the radiant spirits of the party, had all combined to cheat the sensitive young creature into a brief oblivion of her trouble; Griffith, too, clinging closer to her than usual, had never been so brilliantly, exuberantly gay, so that, what with the strange beauty of him and the wild, graceful abandon of glee he was in, no one dreamed how time was passing, until Mr. Gaylure, happening to look at his watch, cried, in jovial astonishment, "Good gracious! ten minutes to six!"

Cordelia and Griffith simultaneously sprung to their feet, and the others looking up at them inquiringly, were shocked to see each charming young face blanched.

"Cora! Griffith! why, what's the matter?" exclaimed sharp-witted Crystal, glancing from one to the other.

"I—I had almost—excuse me, I must go!" faltered Cordelia, confusedly, and with the sentence unfinished on her lips, she hurried down the mountain path.

"Kool!" cried Griffith, with extraordinary terror in his tones, while his large brown eyes glanced hither and thither with an expression of agonized anxiety.

Everybody sprang to their feet, with a general feeling that something horrible had occurred, or was about to occur. Mr. Gaylure, who had covered Cordelia's blushing with murmuring something about sudden indisposition, and that he would follow her, stared at his youthful friend with gradually intensifying attention and comprehension; Adalgisa swept her great superb sleepy orbs over the youth, with his pallid countenance and his hands outstretched after the vanished Cora, and she sent a glance of curious ferocity in that direction, too; but no elucidation of the matter was begun until Thetford's servant, Kool, quiet, deferential, inscrutable in demeanor as usual, stepped from the background where he might have been observed hovering all the afternoon, had he been clumsy enough to permit anybody to be aware of his existence—which he never was. This immaculate gentleman's gentleman approached the excited youth with the matter-of-fact air of one who sees nothing whatever to make a fuss about, and quietly drawing his master's arm through his own, said to Mr. Gaylure, respectfully:

"Mr. Thetford must be excused for a short time; he is subject to bleeding of the nose, which is rather hard to stop; he is generally much alarmed when he feels it coming on." And then he spirited him away; and Adalgisa, perceiving that they took the same path as Cora, set her delicate arched eyebrows upon a luckless beetle which was skulking about in search of hole, and crushed

the gorgeous blue-green coat of him into ruin. A low laugh in her ear sent her lowering eyes to meet the sneering ones of her sister fixed significantly upon her; when she controlled herself with a sullen sort of power, and resumed the slow bedazzlement of the man who had stuck closest to her during the day. Mr. Gaylure then made light of the two abrupt deserts, bade the party think no more of the master, and gracefully kissing his hand to the ladies, he, too, vanished down the mossy pathway.

Meantime Cordelia was walking swiftly toward the beach, her proud spirit quailing and chafing by turns, as she approached the man whose existence meant crime for Colonel Valrose.

She reached the end of the forest path where

it brought her to a picturesque gap in the line of cliffs; the sea-beach lay before her, wet and glistening; the sea crawling and writhing quarter of a mile out as it had been twelve hours ago, when she and her adopted sisters came in from their bath; and there, half-way between the sea and cliffs, directly in front of the cave the hotel people had named the Crystal Grotto, stood a man, motionless.

Cordelia paused a moment, her white hands clutching involuntarily, her cheek flushing hotly, then she walked quickly out on the wet sand, her neck lifted, and her fine eyes dark with haughty impulsive.

The man stood with his face to the sea, and his arms wrapped in a loose cloak, which, as she approached, she unconsciously remarked as threadbare, and of the fashion of a dozen years past; she noted, too, that his jet-black hair was thickly sprinkled with white, that his head was bowed upon his breast, and that he seemed profoundly oblivious of all around him. She was close by before he heard her light footstep on the sand; and he turned a pair of cavernous, dark, gleaming eyes upon her slowly and abstractedly, making a slight mechanical bow, and looking away again, as if he expected no one.

"Mr. Jonas Kercheval?" said Cordelia, icily.

The man started, and fixed his dark eyes upon her with an expression of devouring anxiety.

"Yes, I am Jonas Kercheval," he said, firmly, "and you are my daughter Cordelia."

She shrank within herself as if he had offered her an insult, her eyes flashed and her cheek burned.

"My daughter Cordelia," repeated he, resolutely, though the dark blood rushed in a shamed torrent up under his sensitive skin;

"a living monument of my crime, hating and condemning the lost. Yet you have come to me, you have obeyed my first entreaty, you cannot be heartless!" and he gazed upon her with a hopeless intensity that went to her very heart.

So wan, so woe-begone, so utterly despairing and humiliated, Cordelia's righteous anger was melting swiftly away, leaving a harrowing pity behind.

"I have another daughter at home," resumed Kercheval in his intense, repressed manner—standing before her with his hat off and his bowed head bare to the wind, in an attitude painfully humble; "she is an angel; she has sacrificed her whole life to me; by her I know what a young girl can be! Her mother, too, is as pure in heart, and mind, and life, as—*as you, and poor things, they love me! they love me!*" repeated he, with a sob of terrible distress; "and they don't know about this. How am I to tell them? That's what I've come to you to teach me. How are they to be told that I, to whom they have looked up all their lives, whom they have lived for, am the destroyer of both mother and daughter?"

He paused in his passionate address with a horror in his look, and an urgency of appeal that thrilled Cordelia with poignant realization of his suffering. She trembled before him as she read the signs of the desperate struggle in this man's soul between passion and principle; the vision of these two beloved, pure-hearted women, whom his crime must destroy sooner or later, flashed into her mind with a throb of horrified compassion; her resentment died out in self-reproach, and a pity too deep for words.

She could not see far from wishing to condone his great sin this man was; how his conscience had lashed him; how tragically he loved and feared these two good women who were to be the victims of his penitence; and her own trouble and wrath seemed shallow, selfish and cruel beside his greater anguish, so that at length her generous heart swelled too big for silence, and the gracious words burst forth, widely different from those she had thought to annihilate him with.

"Who am I that I should dare to judge you, sir? In view of your misery my own sinks into mere selfish discomfort. I dare not feel angry with you since I see how heavily God has weighted you with his anger. Do not fear my reproaches, Mr. Kercheval; I shall—I can make none."

His wild excitement gradually cooled down as he heard these lowly-spoken but earnest words, and he gazed upon the beautiful girl with pathetic gratitude and humble admiration.

"Ay, that is your mother's gentle soul over again," he said, dreamily; "Madeline Fleming was as sweet to a woman as ever breathed—though I have been ill."

"I—I had almost—excuse me, I must go!" faltered Cordelia, confusedly, and with the sentence unfinished on her lips, she hurried down the mountain path.

"By accident," said Cordelia, shrinkingly,

"I heard that—you were yet alive—and I left her. I could not endure the daily sight of my mother's degradation."

"Does she know?" whispered Kercheval, after a dreary pause.

"No, I dared not tell her—he never will," said she, with a shudder.

"And Victor—Colonel Valrose," resumed Kercheval, "how has he borne it?"

"It has poisoned his life, just as it has poisoned yours," replied Cordelia; "and I, alas! loving

was aware of the rapid approach of Griffith Thetford, who had just bounded out of one of the sea-caves. Jonas took up the story again, for, hateful as the task of confession was to him, he was too earnestly penitent to spare himself one blush.

"Years ago I failed in business, and retired to the Death Gulch, a wretched, half-forgotten settlement near Silver-Lead, in the State of Wisconsin. I spent the remainder of my shattered fortune in purchasing a ruined farmhouse and a few acres of land; but nothing ever went well with me since that day Victor and I parted, each on his evil course. Besides Anne, Victor's daughter, I had two children—they have never been anything but source of shame and anxiety to their mother and me. Unfeeling, unprincipled, ingrained with selfishness, the trouble and scourge of my life, and yet with enough of their mother in them to lacerate my heart, and enough of me to lacerate hers; ah, if it hadn't been for Anne, I might have perished many a time for all Jessie and Ned would do to help me. And now the storm, which has been gathering all these years, has broken upon me; my cup of trembling is brimming over. A few weeks ago a man came to my hotel door—God alone knows who—I believe he was no mortal, but an emissary sent by God—and taunted me with my unrepentant sin, crying for expiation. Also, he declared that he had seen alive, three months since, him with whom I had made that wicked compact twenty years ago, Victor Valrose. I saw him but a moment, when he vanished, leaving me to my horror and fear, and my guiltless wife and noble Anne cruelly perplexed as to what his words might mean. Then I fell ill, and knew nothing that was passing, until I received an anonymous letter, announcing that my lawful daughter, Cordelia, known as Miss Gaylure, was here with an adopted father, having fled from Colonel Valrose and your mother, his reputed wife, because she had discovered the truth. And I came to you, to tell you that I am anxious to spend what time I have in expiation, if you can show me what to do. Am I to blast Margaret, my pure-souled Margaret, with the infamous tale? Teach me what to do, you who seem to be so high-souled, so brave and strong; point out my path; I'll walk it faithfully as God will permit me."

The sound of running footsteps startled them in the silence that followed Kercheval's last agitated, yet resolutely spoken words; they saw a young man flying toward them from the shore, his head bare, his loose curls streaming back from his forehead, his eyes glittering with a strange brilliancy, and a streak of white foam on his gasping mouth.

Amazed beyond all speech, Cordelia recognized Griffith, but Griffith as she had never seen him before; Griffith, transformed from his own gentle, beautiful, boyish self into a terrible being, possessed, frenzied, madman-like!

She had just time to see, in a confused flash, the dreadful vision of his face; then he was springing upon Jonas Kercheval, his slight hand (usually so gentle) grasping his throat with deadly grip, his glaring eyes fastened upon his.

"How dare you—dare you—attempt to take her from me?" he ground out—but next instant he relaxed his hold, threw up his arms with a piercing, horror-stricken cry, and fell down at Kercheval's feet, lashing his arms about, rolling over and over, while his body seemed rent with convulsive distortions, biting the sand with his audibly clicking teeth, and curdling the blood of the two who stood over him, with a spectacle more wildly horrible than any either had ever dreamed.

Before a word was uttered, two men rushed up, rivaling each other in paleness and swiftness.

These were the keen lawyer and the imperturbable gentleman's gentleman—Gaylure and Kool.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE BAFFLED INTRIGUER.

A GLIMPSE into the respective minds of these two will reveal the true significance of this scene to the reader.

Gaylure, ignorant of any cause why Griffith Thetford should not inherit Warren-Guilderland whenever he came of age, being nearest surviving relative, was scheming to marry him to Cordelia, the daughter of Jonas Kercheval, next of kin after Thetford. Now, why was this shrewd man of affairs so unnatural as to overlook such a glorious chance of marrying one of his own fair daughters to a noble? Because he suspected something about young Thetford. Yes, charming as the young man was—healthily, gay and bright as he was—from the first minute that Mr. Gaylure's sharp eyes had rested upon the blank, calm, impenetrable countenance of Kool, the day he unexpectedly stepped to the front, saying, "Young master has never been without my services since he can remember; where he goes I go." He had bowed in pretended carelessness, acquiescence, but ever since his falcon eye had watched the pair, to see wherefore this matter was thus. What he expected to discover he could not for the life of him have told, but expect something he did, and with such conviction that he calmly apprised the brilliant catch to his adopted daughter instead of to one of his own extravagantly-idolized girls. He thought: "These two married, whatever the lad turns out to be—lunatic, leprosy, or an impostor—the lady being daughter of Jonas Kercheval, next of kin, will inherit—if Jonas will agree to pass over his claim. To that end a reconciliation between the father and daughter is politic. Kercheval do anything in expiation of his crime, and I shall cause her to ask him to pass his rights to her." Then Mr. Gaylure had written the anonymous letter to Kercheval which had sent him to meet his long-parted daughter, and had been watching keenly, ever since her receipt of his, how events would turn. He had been complacently overseeing their interview from behind a sail-knoll, when the extraordinary spectacle of Thetford flying out of one of the sea-caves, toward the pair, sent him after him with all the speed he could put on; to perceive himself joined on the way by Kool, for once unworthy of his name.

And here he stood, discovering at last the Something he had suspected about young Thetford.

Now for Kool. Yes, he had indeed been Griffith Thetford's inseparable companion ever since the boy of six was consigned by the parish authorities to a certain public establishment in which he, Kool, was one of the officials. This mansion was in truth no other than the poor-house, and the parish had given the child's mother already some assistance in the form of a pine coffin, a pauper funeral, and a corner in its Potter's Field. Kool saw that the boy was beautiful, very friendless, very docile, and very terribly noteworthy in one particular. Kool was a quiet, observant man, with a passion for accumulation; he stole the boy and exhibited him in many foreign countries—making a handsome capital out of that one wonderful and awful peculiarity of his. Meantime

he had ferreted out the good blood in his victim's veins, and sagaciously gave him the education and the training of a gentleman, finally putting him forward when the Warren-Guilderland barony was going begging for heirs. He had devoted himself to this unfortunate boy; he had been his constant companion; not a cruel one, either, for the lad regarded him with a piteously-confiding affection, almost believing that in his absence he would die. And it was the present aim of Kool's quiet maneuvers that Thetford should inherit his fortune without the incumbrance of a wife, not only that he wished him to escape Cordelia, whom he knew only as what Gaylure represented her to be, but every woman under the sun—for what woman could keep the terrible secret of poor Griffith Thetford? So, having worked very earnestly but vainly to prevent the lad from surrendering to Cora's charms, he had resolved, this anniversary day of Thetford's affliction, to let the young lady have one peep of him during the paroxysm—just enough to scare and mislead her into aversion. He certainly had not bargained for the keen eyes of the tricky lawyer viewing the tableau, for Kool guessed that, should Gaylure know what he knew, he would throw down Thetford's flag instantly and raise Kercheval's instead, Kool being cognizant of Kercheval and his claim.

Having no suspicion who Cordelia's companion was as she paced the sands in sight of the cave where he had hidden his charge, he had let the lad go, expecting to account for all alarming appearances plausibly enough to merely scare her without disclosing the real horror of the matter.

But how was he to satisfy the curiosity of this razor-sharp lawyer—himself a plotter and intriguer of no mean ability?

Pale as death, the four persons stood over the writhing form of the unfortunate lad, three of them in utter breathless horror and amaze. Then Kool knelt before his master, caught him in his long, steel-strung arms, and endeavored to hold him still, crying as he did so almost in an anguish of angry anxiety:

"Take the lady away, Mr. Gaylure, for God's sake, take her away; this is no place for her! And you, sir, will you fetch a doctor?—somebody—anybody—fly!"

Gaylure was forced to obey, Cordelia clinging to him in terror and looking ready to swoon. He would have infinitely preferred to kneel beside Kool, poring over every symptom of the young man's malady; but Kercheval was already far away on his errand, running wildly.

As the lawyer supported the trembling girl from the spot, he kept looking back at the sufferer, heedless of Cora's gasped out wonder and terror; and, as long as he could distinguish anything, he saw the lad's lithe, slender form twisted, racked and distorted as he had never seen human form convulsed before, except one wretched in prison, condemned to execution, who had swallowed arsenic and died in the agonies of tetanus.

Was this the solution of the mystery which hung about his prize?

Gaylure hurried Cordelia into the house, and waiting for nothing but to whisper a few words into his wife's ear, ran back to the beach. Arriving breathless at the mouth of the deep cut in the delfe which let the promenader step abruptly out of a cool, shadowy, rock-screamed footway upon the wide waste of sand, he uttered a cry. The beach was empty! As he stood there, blankly gazing, he heard footsteps behind him; Jonas Kercheval appeared, accompanied by a gentleman whom Gaylure had seen at the *table d'hôte*, but whose name he had not heard.

"This is a physician," panted Kercheval; "where are they?"

Gaylure gave way, and they stepped upon the beach.

"Gone!" cried Kercheval, looking for explanation at Gaylure.

"Yes, and I don't know where," replied that gentleman, equal irritation and anxiety in his voice; "I was absent only a few minutes and Kool only was with him. Where can they be?"

"Let us examine the tracks," said the physician curtly, and he strode away. Gaylure and Kercheval were left together, and were about to follow the stranger when another thought struck the former, and he detained Kercheval, placing a hand suddenly on his shoulder.

"I am the only protector of the young lady I saw with you just now," said he, scanning the man in an anxious endeavor to gauge his character, with the view to future manipulation in his own particular interests; "she is my adopted daughter, and I have her affairs naturally very much at heart. May I inquire who you are, and what your business was with the young lady?"

As Jonas knew nothing of Gaylure beyond the bald fact just mentioned, that he was the self-appointed guardian of Cordelia, what could he answer to such a question? Reveal his business with Cordelia, and stand branded before this sharp-eyed, keen-looking man, a *biganist*, liable to prosecution and arrest? No! Jonas was far too susceptible to influences, far too quick in his perceptions, to trust to that extent the soul that looked from Mr. Gaylure's very handsome eyes; at the same time, his wife and children starving! And this man was healthy, gay and bright as he was—from the first minute that Mr. Gaylure's sharp eyes had rested upon the blank, calm, impenetrable countenance of Kool, the day he unexpectedly stepped to the front, saying, "Young master has never been without my services since he can remember; where he goes I go."

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sidered himself gifted with the charm of pleasing every one he took the trouble to please.

He stared at the silent Kercheval hard for a moment, then, with dark thoughts in his mind, turned away with a civil bow, meaning to join the doctor. But the conversation, brief as it was, had been long enough for the doctor to vanish off the broad, dusky expanse of sand, as completely as Thetford and Kool had done.

The ill-assorted pair set out, running to find the tracks, did so almost immediately, and followed them into one of the caves.

Within, all was dark as the grave; Gaylure shouted, but only the echoes replied in deafening reverberations. They groped their way in a few paces, but were forced to return to the sands after stumbling disagreeably over heaps of unknown obstacles.

Mr. Gaylure was furious. Kool had outwitted him. In the war of wits between these two, Kool had shown himself the cleverer man.

This secret then was worth hiding thus carefully. What was to be gathered from that?

What Mr. Gaylure gathered was that Griffith Thetford was an epileptic, subject to periodic fits; therefore, not eligible for the great destiny designed for him by Gaylure. Gryppe's plot was explained at last. He had known of these fits, and that was why he had allowed Gaylure to carry off the prize.

Well, what was to be done now? Thetford out of the combat, who had remained? Jonas Kercheval and his daughter Cordelia.

Gaylure had declared himself in favor of Kercheval. Check the first.

But, Gaylure had possession of Cordelia, and Cordelia had Jonas under control. So had Gaylure, for that matter, since he had only to whisper, "I know you are a bigamist."

Gaylure made up his mind to take Kercheval in hand, wring from him a promise to refuse to go to law about the property, when Gryppe counseled him to litigation. Stake all on Cordelia, and marry her to Thetford in spite of what he had discovered, for security.

The two men were walking back to the Alhambra, side by side, both sunk in reverie. But Gaylure now broke the silence.

"Do you know anything concerning your ancestry?" queried he, abruptly.

"That is a singular question," said Kercheval, after a pause of astonishment. "Pardon my rudeness if I reiterate it on my side—do you?"

"Yes," said Gaylure. "I know that after the young man Thetford, you are heir to the barony of Warren-Guilderland, a noble property."

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The dance broke up about midnight. The guests departed for home, and we for our camp.

The next morning we awoke to find it raining. The glories of our Indian summer had vanished as had Jim's dreams of love, and our sport for the season was done.

After a short consultation we concluded to bid adieu to the lakes and prairies of the northwest, and turn our faces southward; and acting upon this conclusion we were soon ready for departure.

Uncle Lige came down to bid us good-by, as we mounted our vehicle to start he handed me a letter with the request to read it at leisure. We bid him good-by and rolled away. When fairly on the road I opened the letter and read:

IOWA, Oct. 10, 1875.

DEAR SIR:—Perhaps you have often thought I had forgotten you entirely, but not so. I could never forget the good times we had, under your guidance, two years ago among the Northern lakes.

By the way, four young friends of mine start for Wall Lake and the North soon. I have recommended you to them, and they will doubtless call on you for your services as guide. You can rely upon them, and now all I have to request of you is that you put them through the severest course of sprouts the limited resources of your country will afford, and oblige.

Yours, very truly,

W. W. J.—

"Exactly," said Jim when I had concluded that "that night on the lake, that 'surround' by prairie fire and a few other blood-calling incidents, I suppose, are among the resources of the country." I am sure they have been all that an adventurous heart could wish for."

And we all concurred in his decision—feeling sure that Uncle Lige had fulfilled the request of his friend, W. W. J., to the utmost extent of his power.

THE END.

DISCIPLINE.

BY JOHN GOSSIP.

My heart knows not why it was once denied
To sing its sweetest song;
My soul knows not why doors which now stand
Were closed to it so long;

Each knows but this, it needed to be tried—
For suffering makes strong.

SURE-SHOT SETH, The Boy Rifleman;

OR,
THE YOUNG PATRIOTS OF THE NORTH.

BY OLL COOMES,
AUTHOR OF "IDAHO TOM," "RED ROB," "DA-
KOTA DAN," "OLD DAN RACKBACK," ETC.

CHAPTER XXIV.

CLOSE QUARTERS INDEED.

VISHNIA waited not to learn whom her rescuers were, but wild with fear, she pushed off from the beach and sped toward the stronghold of her father upon the lake. But, after she had had a few moments for thought, and her mind had become somewhat composed, she felt a pang of regret for having acted so hastily in leaving her unknown friends without a word of thanks, after they had saved her. To remedy this, however, was now too late; and she was to remain in ignorance, for the time being, as to the persons who had befriended her.

Seth and Hooseah felt in no way aggrieved by the course she had pursued. In fact, it was just what they wanted, for no sooner was Hawk-Eyes free than he gave the alarm that brought a horde of the savages yelling to the water's edge. But, all they found was a comrade lying dead, his head cloven by a tomahawk.

The two scouts at once beat a hasty retreat along the shore back toward their friends, whom they found in a fever of excitement and anxiety. Seth lost no time in communicating to Harris the discovery he had made respecting Maggie.

"Good Lord bless you, boy!" the happy father exclaimed, wringing Seth's hand. "It relieves my heart of an awful load to know that my child lives; but now, another fear rises in my mind—the fear that the madman on that craft may do her violence."

"Rest easy on that point, Mr. Harris," said Seth, "for I assure you no harm can befall her; for she has for a companion as fair and lovely a girl as the sun ever shone upon. I heard her refuse to give Maggie to the savages to insure her own and her father's safety. No; Maggie is safe; but the mystery surrounding that raft has deeply enlisted my interest."

"Then you don't think the folks on that compass are crazy, do you, now?" asked Joyful Jim.

"Far from it; for, if the rest are to be judged by that maiden whom Hooseah tells me is Vishnia, the Maid of the Valley—she who rescued you at Rock Island, then they are superior to you. By keeping in the vicinity of the lake we may be enabled to unravel the mystery. It is true, our assistance may be needed at the Agency; but if by remaining here we can hold a score or two of Indians away from there, we will be rendering them a great service; so suppose we now seek some safe quarters and rest easy till morning!"

"Nuff said," exclaimed old Jim, "for I'm bout bumfusticated."

All readily acquiesced in Seth's suggestion when the party at once moved a mile southward and bivouaced on the margin of the Black Woods. Here they passed the night, and with the first streaks of dawn they were astir. Hooseah brained a deer with his tomahawk, shortly after daylight, which furnished a hearty breakfast and an ample supply of food for the needs of the day.

Regaled by their brief sleep, and their meal of savory venison, the Boy Brigade felt vigorous, and anxious for the day's excitement to begin.

Hooseah and young Tricks being deployed as scouts, the party started back toward the lake. They had proceeded but a short distance when fire was heard in advance, and the peculiar war-cry of Le Subtile Wolf warned the Brigade that danger was near.

In a moment every man and boy sought shelter, and the dozen red-skins in pursuit of Hooseah found themselves in an ambuscade of deadly enemies ere they were aware. A short, but desperate conflict ensued. The red-skins were routed, and but for the dense shadows of the Black Woods, not a man of them would have escaped.

Fierce and terrible the war-cry of the Boy Brigade was hurled after the foe, and wild and demoniacal came the response from the enemy.

The Brigade pressed on toward the lake, and at length came in sight of it. The first thing that met their view was the floating cabin of old Neptune. Smoke was curling from one of the little chimney-like boxes on the roof. The door opened, and all saw a little female figure, with a vessel in her hand, trip out upon the

porch or platform in front, and dip some water from the lake, then re-enter the building.

"That was the fair Vishnia," said Seth.

"Doin' up the housework," added Joyful Jim, with a strange smile.

"And yonder," said Mr. Harris, "you can see a horde of Indians preparing to embark in canoes from the east shore; and, I dare say, they have designs upon the palace of old Neptune. Boys, can't we drive them away?"

"Neptune will defend himself, I'll guarantee," said Justin Gray. "I'll venture the asser-

tion that he's surrounded with torpedoes."

Gaining a point where they could command a full view of the savages, the boys watched their operations with no little interest. And it was soon discovered that, in addition to the four canoes which they had brought to Lake Luster during the night, a huge raft of logs was in course of construction. No less than a dozen logs were in the water already, lying at right-angles with the shore, and about three feet apart. Across the ends of these, a long pine stick of timber was placed and firmly lashed to each cross-piece. Another log, but smaller in size, was lashed across the other ends of the under logs, and then the raft seemed to have been completed. Between every two logs, two savages took their position, their bodies submerged in the water and their heads and shoulders concealed behind the large log lashed across the ends of the others.

It was rather a rude, yet effectual raft for the purpose intended, and our friends watched the preparations for the attack upon Neptune with no little fear and doubt.

"If they succeed in getting within easy gun-shot of Neptune's raft, I am afraid they will be successful in their attempts," said Sure Shot.

"However, we will walk around that way and perhaps we'll get an opportunity to take the red rascals in the rear."

"And perhaps Niptoon," said old Jim, "will bring another of them double-gear'd, volcano contraptions to mince the varlets into fish-bait."

"I hope so," said Harris, "but it seems as though the devils were bound to have my poor child."

"Ah, there goes the raft!" exclaimed young Gray.

True enough the savages remaining on shore had pushed the raft away from the bank, and slowly and heavily the cumbersome affair drifted out, propelled by the feet of those in the water.

"Now, boys," said Seth, "let us hurry around there and do our best for the friends on the lake."

Away they glided like so many shadows, and soon came within range of the Indians, watching upon the bank. Without a moment's delay they opened a deadly fire upon them. The savages at once sought shelter; but in such a position as to cover the operations of their friends on the lake.

Harris kept by the side of the fearless young borderman, Sure Shot Seth, and it was with a feeling of the deepest agony that he learned of their inability to prevent the advance of the raft upon the structure that sheltered his child.

The Boy Brigade was now in its element again. Concealed behind trees, logs and bushes, the fearless youths watched with eager, burning eyes for a glimpse of an enemy. They fought the Indians as Indians fight; and as the red-skins were laboring under the excitement of a surprise, they appeared restles and impatient, and kept dodging hither and thither like rats, exposing themselves to view; and whenever the clear report of a rifle, fired by one of the boys, stung through the morning air, a death-yell was sure to follow.

Sure Shot and Harris were where they could command a view of both the Indians' raft and the floating cabin of old Neptune. They saw the latter come out on the porch or platform of his domicile, stoop over and place something in the water, as on the previous night.

"Now look out!" exclaimed Seth; "it's my opinion you'll hear something 'drop.' That man has sent another of his infernal machines to intercept them savages."

A savage around the lake fired at the old man, but his bullet struck the water several rods short of its mark, skinned along the surface and sunk near the floating cabin. A derisive laugh rang from the lips of the intended victim.

"Good Lord bless you, boy!" the happy father exclaimed, wringing Seth's hand. "It relieves my heart of an awful load to know that my child lives; but now, another fear rises in my mind—the fear that the madman on that craft may do her violence."

"Rest easy on that point, Mr. Harris," said Seth, "for I assure you no harm can befall her; for she has for a companion as fair and lovely a girl as the sun ever shone upon. I heard her refuse to give Maggie to the savages to insure her own and her father's safety. No; Maggie is safe; but the mystery surrounding that raft has deeply enlisted my interest."

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ages coming directly toward them. To their left the woods were now swarming with the foe, apparently intent upon the capture of Sure Shot Seth. Behind, the latter knew, the way was cut off, while the lake on the right completed the circle of danger menacing them.

They stopped and glanced around them.

"What will we do?—where shall we go?" asked Harris.

Seth glanced out upon the lake. A few yards from the shore he beheld a large log—one of the timbers of the savages' raft—floating on the water. Its presence seemed to suggest an idea to the youth, who, requesting his companion to follow, started toward the lake.

"Secure your rifle and swim for that log, Harris," the young rifleman cried, as they approached the shore.

Instantly their weapons were secured, and plunging into the water they swam like beavers for the log in question. The savages, with frightened yell, came rushing toward the shore, and several of them succeeded in getting a shot at the fugitives; but they acted with such haste and excitement that no injury was sustained by the whites.

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HIGH FLOWN.

BY JOE JOY, JR.

She occupies within my mind
A place that's not a kite;
Longer than a kite;
And stronger than a calcium-light.
She's tenderer than a fresh-lunch steak,
And gentle as fresh-dressed lamb;
Her nose like my allowance—short,
And she's as pensive as a clam.
I love her like I love myself,
As strong as any man's true law.
Her hair's too curly for a comb;
Her voice refers me to her pa.
Her lips they blossom like the rose;
As red as hamel are her cheeks;
A short-hand man could not describe
The way they dimple when she speaks.
In any printing shop in town
You'd find her in her type;
Put all the world into a page,
You'd not sift out a girl so ripe.
In all dressmaking stores around
You could not find her pattern, sir;
She fills the very world to me
Since I have made so much of her.
She's charitable unto the poor
As any baker's loaf of bread;
And nothing heavier than a hat
Can ever rest upon her head.
I love her harder than boiled eggs,
An artist in the photo line
Could never picture how I feel.
Perhaps the hopes I have of her
Are wilder than an untamed goose,
But if I knew her love was mine
I'd feel much easier than old shoes.

A Little Game.

BY MARY REED CROWELL.

"You understand me, now, Ernestine? You are not to have any communication whatever with Mr. Harold Payne, you are not to see him, or hear from him, or write to him—that is your mother's instruction to me, and in order to break off this infatuation between you and him, you have come to spend the winter with me."

Miss Althea Laurelton put on her glasses and then peered over the top of them at the pretty girl sewing so compositely in the big sunny window, that you never would have thought she had been unfortunate in her love affairs, and sent down into the gloom of winter in the country for the express purpose of administering a wholesome lesson.

A bright-eyed, dimpled-cheeked and petite little lady, with a lovely, fresh bloom on her cheeks, and a haughty little scarlet mouth that curled ever so slightly as she listened to Miss Althea; and yet she was severely "crossed in love" and that too, by her own mother, and not because Dr. Payne was not socially and intellectually and morally her equal, but because he had not money enough to give Mrs. Laurelton's daughter as handsome a setting as the owner of the jewel demanded.

And, Tunis Van Harten could! Tunis Van Harten, with his money-bags only equalled in their godly fatness by his disagreeable countenance; with his many disagreeable qualities fully balanced by his stupendous ugliness.

And Mamma Laurelton had laid the case very plainly before Ernestine.

"You shall never marry that young, black-mustached doctor with my consent, Ernestine, and I am free to admit that I believe you are foolish enough to do it without, so I shall take good care you do not have the opportunity. I have written to your father's sister, and she has agreed to receive you and take good care of you."

Ernestine had listened with her brave young heart sinking at the dismal prospect, but she was sensible, and she answered cheerfully without manifesting a sign of her real feelings.

"Very well, mamma, I will go to aunt Althea's whenever you wish, but I can assure you I never will give Dr. Payne up."

Every bit of the Laurelton stubbornness was in the quiet remark, but the lady would not notice it.

"You will either stay down there until you give him up, or agree to marry my friend Mr. Van Harten."

And on those conditions Ernestine went down in the sore, brown, frozen country, where Miss Althea Laurelton was fully prepared and fully competent for the task of playing dragon to the independent, gracious-mannered young girl who had but one fault in the world—that of loving Dr. Payne.

"I am astonished at you, Ernestine," Miss Althea said, this bright, sunshiny day, when the snow laid on the country roads a deep, packed smoothness, and Ernestine felt more like flying out into the cold, keen air than sitting at her everlasting sewing, for Mrs. Laurelton had given express orders that Ernestine should not spoil her hands with housework.

"I am perfectly astonished at you, Ernestine! Harold Payne has nothing in the world beyond his precarious income as a struggling doctor, while Mr. Van Hart—"

"I will not listen to any praises of Mr. Van Harten, or any condemnations of Harry Payne. He is grand and good and noble and gallant and true, and I love him! There!"

And Ernestine's blue eyes flashed as only bright blue eyes can snap, and Miss Althea changed the subject wisely.

"I am going over in the one-horse sleigh to the village this afternoon, and if you wish you may go with me. Perhaps you'll be lonesome here until eight o'clock, with only Bridget in the kitchen."

No, Ernestine would not be lonesome, neither did she wish to go, and so Miss Laurelton drove herself in the little old-fashioned sleigh, thinking very seriously of the command she had laid on Bridget, that no gentleman be admitted during her absence, and wondering if the unnatural life Ernestine was leading had anything to do with the loss of color she noticed, and the occasional pain in her side Ernestine sometimes mentioned.

Miss Althea's half uneasy reverie was dissipated by her reaching one of the main points of her destination—the village post-office, where she received her weekly *Examiner*, and, quite to her surprise, a letter addressed in a bold, flaming hand to Ernestine, in her care, also a dirty, mussy-looking epistle to herself, if the address, "mis Althea laurelton," was supposed to mean her.

She put on her glasses deliberately, and looked intently at Ernestine's letter, as though it would have been a great comfort to have known what there was in it. But, for all her harshness, she was honorable, and, instead of opening and reading the letter, as she might have so easily done, she tore it in pieces, then threw it in the stove in the post-office building.

"You don't come any game over me, Doctor Payne!" she said, apostrophizing the correctly-supposed author of the letter, and she smiled grimly to think what a conscientious dragon she was, in the performance of her duty to her poor deceased brother's misguided daughter.

Then, with a woman's natural curiosity, she set about reading the other letter—no easy task, for the handwriting was a marvel of difficulty to decipher, not to mention the decidedly original spelling of the words.

But she made it out, and learned from it that the writer, who signed no name, sympathized with her—Miss Althea—in the matter of her nice, and, as a specimen of their charity and sympathy, begged of Miss Althea to drive as fast as she could to a certain place indicated, where she would ascertain for herself, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that her nice's "young man" was not what he should be. And knowing the truth, the letter delicately insinuated, Miss Althea would be the better able to protect the young lady's interests, and be personally able to convince her of her lover's worthlessness.

So—Miss Althea decided to follow the advice of the letter, with a mental thanksgiving that she could at last be of real, practical service in the crusade against Doctor Payne.

"Whoever wrote it must be more of a friend than they're willing to admit," she thought, as Sorrel trotted along in the late afternoon, when I was laboring. "Cousin John said you were one of the oldest engineers on the road."

Her thoughts ran eagerly on, far faster than the old horse's feet, and by the time Miss Althea thought she should be pretty near to something, she was cold, and tired, and not a little cross; and freezing, and very stiff from sitting so long, and most undeniably ill-humored, when she suddenly discovered that the road she had taken according to the strictest directions of the letter, instead of bringing her to some retired den of iniquity, where thieves and gamblers congregated, or perhaps to a house where she would find out that Doctor Payne was already married man, or something equally positive—instead of any of these, the road came to a sudden stop by leading into a wide-reaching, barren, snow-covered meadow, a wide-reaching, barren, snow-covered meadow, with a chimney and a wall-asfar as she could see!

Miss Althea stood up in the bottom of the sleigh, gazing wraithfully around. "I've been sold—I—Miss Laurelton, of Clayville, regularly sold! And here I am, fifteen miles from home, and the sun going down, and a bitter cold frost in the air! Miss Ernestine, you shall pay for this!"

Although what Ernestine had to do with it, she could not have told, only that the girl was the only safety valve available. It was long after eight o'clock—long after nine, when Miss Althea walked into her sitting-room, numb and purple with the intense cold.

It was charmingly warm and brilliantly lighted, and wore an air of delightful home comfort—but Ernestine was not sitting in the cushioned rocking chair that was drawn up to the fire.

"Bridget!" Miss Althea shouted, "has Ernestine gone to bed?"

Bridget answered in a wide-eyed surprise: "Gone to bed, mem? And wasn't it you self that sent after her to meet yees down to the post-office in the village?"

"Sent after her?"

Miss Althea stared and grew hot and cold. Bridget returned the look with interest.

"Sent after her?" she re-echoed. "Who came for her?" Her voice was faint, her face palely gloomy.

"Indeed, and I never seen him afore, on'y it was a proper foine young felly with the blackest eyes and mustache!"

"Black eyes and black mustache! Good Lord, Bridget, what a fool you've been—he was the very one we've been guarding her from!" And to think—in my very soul I believe it was a job between them to get me out of the way!"

Bridget's eyes were like saucers.

"Faix, an' I was to know a man what I'd never lay'd me eyes on afore! Indade and how c'd I tell, and he a-rangin' at the dhurbell as proper, and a-thlivir' of message from yees, biddin' Miss Airstine to meet yees at warnce on pertickeler business at the post-offs!"

Miss Althea rocked and groaned and then fell in a limber mass against the chair cushion.

"To think he's taken her from under my very nose!" Bridget Maloney—you shall answer for this!"

And when, several weeks afterward, Dr. and Mrs. Payne called on aunt Althea, assuring her she might conscientiously forgive them, since Mrs. Laurelton, *merc'e*, had done so, Ernestine told Bridget she should never want friends while she and the doctor lived.

And Ernestine is happy as a bird—while if any one happens to mention anonymous letters she and her handsome doctor look suspiciously innocent and ignorant of such disgraceful proceedings.

An Engineer's Story.

BY LUCILLE HOLLIS.

"Are you all right, ma'am?"

"All right, thank you."

The engineer jerked a cord that let loose a horrible, long, shrill whistle, and moved a great steel bar at my side that I watched with a awful suspicion of oil, and heartrending fears regarding my new peacock-blue silk. The grimy-faced fireman gave a few vicious tugs at the bell, pulled open the door of the furnace by a massive chain, and with much clatter poked at the fire within until it showered out a column of blazing smoke, shovelled in some coal, clashed the door shut, and we were off. And all that happened in a mere trifle of the time it has taken to tell it.

I looked at my watch. It was seven o'clock and broad daylight, for the time was summer. Seven o'clock! and the wedding was at eight, and we had fifty miles to go! I suppose my face had an anxious look when I turned it to the engineer, meeting his full gaze.

"Oh! I'll get you there in time, ma'am; I'm bound to. We'll make the fifty miles in fifty minutes, and weddin's mostly never are on time. And the superintendent telegraphed you'd be there."

"Did he? That was nice of cousin John. I was so flurried I never thought of that." And I felt relieved, as I judiciously gave another tuck to my silken robes under my linen duster. As I did so, I received a dreadful jar that caused me to drop them again, and materially decreased my mental temperature. A realization was forced upon me of the frightful way in which we were dashing over the rails; while, at the same time, the atmosphere within the engine grew so rapidly hotter and hotter that I caught myself doubting if the fireman and engineer were ever afraid to die—no matter how orthodoxy they had been brought up.

With desperate efforts I learned to maintain my center of gravity, though, as I gathered together again my breath and my robes, I clasped despairingly the window ledge beside my high seat. Presently, as one will grow accustomed to any situation, I became quite used to the frantic bounds of our madly-speeding con-

veyance, and even commenced to take some interest in my material surroundings. But to me, all unused to this novel and frightful way of traveling, the fleeting landscapes, and flying villages, were only productive of a decidedly unpleasant, dizzy sensation. As a purely sanitary measure, I was forced to make an attempt to obtain amusement within the engine. I fell back, for comfort, upon my sex's unfailing source of occupation, my tongue.

"We are traveling at a terrible rate," said I to the engineer.

He saw that I had spoken, but as I had not pitched my voice nearly loud enough for him to distinguish the words, called out:

"What is it, ma'am?"

"We're traveling with terrible rapidity," I almost screamed, articulating each word as if I were teaching a class in phonetics. "Are you sure there is no danger?"

"Oh, no! none whatever, ma'am; this is a perfect engin."

"I suppose you are accustomed to it," I ventured, still trying to carry on the conversation, notwithstanding the disadvantage under which I was laboring. "Cousin John said you were one of the oldest engineers on the road."

"Yes," he said, brightening up, "I was an engineer here when the superintendent was only a little boy, the son of a conductor; but you see we don't often have a call to travel like this, and I'm not likely to forget the first time I did it."

I saw by his looks that the reminiscence was a pleasant one, and, to encourage him to continue, asked: "Why did something happen?"

"Well, I reckon something did happen!" he said, emphatically, getting as near to me as possible.

"I would like to hear about it," I shouted, sympathetically.

"Well, ma'am, you see I was a young engineer, then, only just promoted to be an engineer; an' there came an awful storm that lasted about three days. Everything went right along the road until the third day; when, late in the afternoon, they commenced to git worried in the office, because something was the matter with the wires. They couldn't git no messages; and an Eastern train, that had been due for half an hour, had not been heard from along our part of the line. It stormed awful just as it never meant to stop! The rain was down in buckets and the wind was blowin' a roarin' hurricane, to say nothing of the thunder and lightnin' that commenced about dark."

"Well, I didn't run no regular train yet. I was kinder kept around the yard, shifting cars and the like, and goin' out on specials; and as I was loadin' in my engin', thinkin' that I blessed my stars I hadn't to be on the road such a night, who should jump up in my box but the old superintendent himself, and a dreadful grave-face he had, too."

"Abe," says he, "do you think you could take engin' number four, the Lightning, and carry me down to Coon's Creek faster than you went before in your life?"

"I reckon I could, sir," says I. I felt kinder skeerish, but Jim Meigs, who always ran the Eastern express, had been a-teasin' me only that mornin', called me a 'play engineer,' and said I'd be frightened to death if I had to do any real work. Here's a chance, thought I, to show him. So I straightened up, and said more lively than ever, "I reckon I could, sir."

"Very well," said he; "call Morris!" Morris was the fireman—and I'll be with you in two minutes."

"Well, sir," said my companion, getting so excited that he quite forgot his passenger was of the sex that could wear new peacock silks. "In five minutes we was just a-flyin' along that road like mad, with the storm howlin' all around us and the rain fairly sizzlin' down on the engin'."

Morris and I kept a sharp lookout, with our hearts layin' pretty near our throats; for we wasn't very certain as to what minute we might come to some unlucky end. You see, the road wasn't no double-tracker, all the way, in those days; and often we had gone about twenty miles, and passed two out-trains waitin' at stations for the delayed Eastern; we thought we might just as likely as not telescope it into anywhere along the track. And you see that wasn't a very cheerful thought with us travelin' at the rate of nearly a mile a minit.

"The old superintendent, he said never a word; but he couldn't even smoke the segars he lighted, only kept bitin' the ends off and pitchin' 'em away. And when we got down into Coon's county, in the long stretches of wood—well soon be a-passin' through 'em, ma'am—the wind was just a-tearin' at the trees, and made the limbs and shades beat across the track, that even with the light of the engin' we couldn't always make out what they was; and a dozen times or so, Morris and I looked at each other, a sort of good-by.

"But, at last, we flew out of the shadars, almost down by Coon's Creek. You see 'twas a dangerous sort of a place; first the creek, with a narrow bridge—and one track across it, and then a high bit of land through which the road had been cut with a sudden curve. Well, we just a-sweepin' near enough to see that the creek was awfully swollen when Morris gave a scream.

"Good God!" says he, "there's a woman on the bridge!"

"I looked, and sure enough there she was; takin' careful steps from one plank to another, with the river a-rushin' beneath her and a roarin' so, I suppose, that she couldn't a' heard the angel Gabriel's horn itself! for the old superintendent was a-pullin' at the whistle; but she went right on, takin' those careful steps across the planks!"

"Abe," says the superintendent, "stop the engin'! for Heaven's sake, stop the engin'!"

"I can't, sir," says I. "It's too late," and just then she saw the light of the engin', turned around, and threw up her arms! and there we were bearing down upon her—though Morris was slowing up the best he could.

"Just then a sudden thought came to me. There wasn't but one chance in ten for the woman's life; and that chance I'd give her, for the sake of the mother and sister I loved at home. I sprung out on the engin' and down to the cow-catcher. The bridge, as I said afore, was narrow; and it hadn't so much as a plank of sidin'. I reached my place just in time; another minute and she would have been lost!—so young and pretty she was, too! As we came down upon her, she standin' there balanced on one of the logs, I gathered all my strength and flung her into the river."

"Good gracious!" cried I, wrought up by the narrative, "I thought you were going to try to save her!"

"That's just what I'm a-tellin' you," said the engineer; then to the fireman: "Rake down your fire well. Yes, that's just what I'm a-tellin' you. You see by the time we got across the bridge we slowed up. 'Now, sir,' says I, to the superintendent, 'I'm a good swimmer. Can I go in after the girl?'

"'Yes,' says he, 'and Morris, you take a

lantern and go on ahead, along the track; and give me the other, and I'll see if I can help Abe, here, rescue the girl.' I just hopped right into Coon's Creek. I knew the current would bring her toward our bank, only a little lower down. And sure enough I found her, and got her out in no time; and, if you'll believe me, the plucky little thing was a-clingin' to an oil-can she had, and as soon as she opened her eyes, called out:

"'I'm all right; take the oil, quick! quick!'

"'Take the oil for what?' says I, thinkin' she must be somethin' wrong in the head. But just then I saw Morris' lantern come rushing back along the track, like mad; and he a-screamin' to the superintendent, 'There's been a land-slide round in the cut; and the wires are broken, and the